WELLINGTON COLLEGE BELFAST

Anti-Bullying Policy

Reviewed by The Board of Governors October 2020

Context

The Wellington College Anti-Bullying Policy has been created in the context of the following legislation, policies and guidance.

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1990);
- Pastoral Care in School: Promoting Positive Behaviour (DE, 2001);
- Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003;
- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools (DE, 2017).

Key points to note:

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016:
- Provides a legal definition of bullying;
- Places a duty on the Board of Governors to put in place measures to prevent bullying behaviour, in consultation with pupils and parents;
- Requires schools to record all incidents of bullying behaviour and alleged bullying incidents;
- Sets out under which circumstances this policy should be applied, namely:

  · In school, during the school day
  · While travelling to and from school
  · When under control of school staff, but away from school (e.g. school trip)
  · When receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere (e.g. in another school in the ALC)
  · Requires that the policy be updated at least every four years.

The Education and Libraries Order (NI) 2003, requires the Board of Governors to: 'Safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils' (A.17) The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out every child's right to:
- Be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, maltreatment or exploitation;
- Be protected from discrimination;
- Express their views, in a supported and accessible way, on issues that affect them; and to have their opinions taken seriously;
- Education.

Rationale

At Wellington College Belfast, we firmly believe that bullying behaviour of any kind by any member of the College community to any other member(s) is completely unacceptable. Everyone within the College, regardless of individual differences including, but not limited to, culture, race, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation, gender orientation, appearance, ability

or disability, have the right to learn in a safe, caring and nurturing environment; one which is free from the threat of harm, both physical and emotional. All members are valued and their rights protected.

In all elements of College life, both inside and outside of the classroom, the College endeavours to promote positive relationships. Furthermore, the College aims to create an environment in which students, parents/ guardians and staff feel comfortable to report any bullying incidents which they feel are taking place.

Aims

At Wellington College, our aims in relation to Anti-Bullying are to:

- educate our College community of what constitutes bullying behaviour
- make the students and parents/carers fully aware as to how to raise any bullying concerns
- ensure that any bullying behaviour is reported to by students and parents/carers
- respond to all reported instances of bullying behaviour appropriately
- support students who have been targeted by bullying behaviour
- guide those students who engage in bullying behaviour to adopt a more conscientious and empathetic attitude
- ensure robust monitoring and review procedures are in place following incidents of bullying behaviour
- provide up to date training for staff and governors

Definition of Bullying:

The College uses the legal definition of bullying for Northern Ireland as defined in the 2016 Anti-Bullying Act:

(1) In this Act 'bullying' includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use of:
  (a) any verbal, written or electronic communication,
  (b) any other act (including exclusion and omission), or
  (c) any combination of those, by a pupil or a group of pupils against another pupil or group of pupils, with the intention of causing physical or emotional harm to that pupil or group of pupils.

The phrase **'is not limited to'** in the definition above gives the College the legal discretion to define a one-off incident as bullying behaviour. This may be particularly the case when the behaviour takes the form of electronic communication. For example, repetition can occur through the repeated viewing and sharing of a post even if there is only one post.

The phrase **'emotional harm'** is defined as distress or anxiety intentionally caused by scarring, humiliating or affecting a student's self-esteem.

The phrase **'physical harm'** is defined as intentionally hurting a student causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.

The term **'exclusion'** is defined as intentionally choosing (acting) to stop someone/others from joining in.

The term **'omission'** is defined as where a student is deliberately left out and where there is a wilful failure to include a student. Examples could include purposefully excluding a student from a group of friends' activities or group work in lessons.

While bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that the school will consider as bullying. When assessing a one-off incident, to make a decision on whether to classify it as bullying, the school shall consider the following criteria:
- severity and significance of the incident;
- evidence of pre-meditation;
- impact of the incident on individuals (physical/emotional);
- impact of the incidents on wider school community;
- previous relationships between those involved;
- any previous incidents involving the individuals.

The following unacceptable behaviours, when repeated, targeted and intentionally hurtful, may be considered a bullying behaviour:

Verbal or written acts
- saying mean and hurtful things to, or about, others
- making fun of others
- calling another pupil mean and hurtful names
- telling lies or spreading false rumours about others
- trying to make other pupils dislike another student/s

Physical acts
- hitting
- kicking
- pushing
- shoving
- material harm, such as taking/stealing money or possessions or causing damage to possessions

Omission (Exclusion)
- leaving someone out of a game
- refusing to include someone in group work

Electronic Acts
- using online platforms or other electronic communication to carry out many of the written acts noted above
- impersonating someone online to cause hurt
- sharing images (e.g. photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone

This list is not exhaustive and that other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.

There are various motivations behind bullying, including those named in the Act. These include, but are not limited to:

- age
- appearance
- breakdown in peer relationships
- community background
- political affiliation
- gender identity
- sexual orientation
- pregnancy
- marital status
- race
- religion
- disability/SEN
- ability
- Looked After Child status
- Young Carer status

Terminology

In line with the legislation as mentioned above, the College will apply the following language when reviewing bullying behaviour: 'student *displaying* bullying behaviour' and 'student(s) *experiencing* bullying behaviour'. Previous language which used to include 'bully', 'victim' and 'perpetrator' is no longer considered appropriate. In the College, we believe that it is important to avoid labelling and stereotyping individual students and to focus instead on the *behaviours*.

Vulnerable Students

The College acknowledges that any student can experience bullying behaviours. Additionally, the College is aware that some groups of students are potentially more vulnerable than others to this behaviour. Vulnerable groups may include pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, members of the College's LGBTQ+ community and students from ethnic minorities. To ensure that all pupils are made aware about the impact of bullying, the Personal Development curriculum throughout the College educates students as part of preventative measures.

Preventative Measures

The College has in place a number of measures to promote inclusion and prevent bullying behaviours. At the core of this lies the College's ethos of acceptance of all members of the College community through celebration of differences as well as similarities.

In addition, the following measures are in place:

- Consistent implementation of the Positive Behaviour Policy, including the promotion and rewarding of positive behaviour
- The creation and maintenance of positive relationships
- Creation and maintenance of an ethos which promotes aspiration, achievement and restoration
- Promotion of the welfare and wellbeing of students
- Provision of effective guidance and support
- Reduction/removal of barriers to learning
- A robust and relevant Personal Development Programme
- Active collaboration with external partners including transport services and specialist external agencies
- Whole school awareness of and participation in national Anti-Bullying initiatives such as Anti-Bullying Week/Anti-Bullying Ambassadors
- An expectation that all members of the College community work collaboratively to prevent bullying
- A 'Restorative' approach to behaviour management
- access to extra-curricular activities to promote friendships
- access to the 'Hub' under the guidance of the SENCO/Classroom Assistant
- appropriate and relevant staff training

Roles and Responsibilities

All members of the College community have an active role to play ensuring that bullying behaviour is addressed.

When an incident is reported or observed by a **Member of Staff**:
- **The member of staff** records the details of the incident and passes it on to Head of Year
- **The Head of Year** interviews pupils involved and determines a course of action
- The student experiencing bullying behaviour is supported; student displaying bullying behaviour spoken to/sanctioned/supported, parents/carers are informed and a record is placed on SIMS.

When an incident is reported or observed by a **Parent/Carer**:
- **The parent/carer** contacts the College and speaks to the Head of Year
- **The Head of Year** investigates report and determines course of action
- The student experiencing bullying behaviour is supported; student displaying bullying behaviour spoken to/sanctioned/supported, parents/carers are informed and a record is placed on SIMS.

When an incident is reported or observed by a **Student**:
- **The student** informs a member of staff
- **The member of staff** records and passes details on to Head of Year
- **The Head of Year** interviews students involved and determines a course of action

- The student experiencing bullying behaviour is supported; student displaying bullying behaviour spoken to/sanctioned/supported, parents/carers are informed and a record is placed on SIMS.

When an incident is reported or observed by a **Non-Teaching Member of Staff**:
- **The non-teaching member of staff** informs a member of teaching staff
- **The member of teaching staff** records and passes details on to Head of Year
- **The Head of Year** interviews students involved and determines a course of action
- The student experiencing bullying behaviour is supported; student displaying bullying behaviour spoken to/sanctioned/supported, parents/carers are informed and a record is placed on SIMS.

Procedures for Reporting Bullying

Any member of the College community can report bullying behaviour. This can be done in person, via telephone or in writing.

Upon receipt of the communication, the appropriate procedures, as outlined above, will take place.

Stage 1
Both the Positive Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy apply to behaviour which takes place during College activities described in The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, described on page 1 of this policy.

Stage 2
When a bullying incident is reported and when investigated, it is deemed not to be bullying, then the positive behaviour policy will be applied. The College will introduce both parties involved to participate in a restorative conversation in order to talk about the incident, the impact that the incident had and the way forward.

When a bullying incident is reported and when investigated, it is deemed to be bullying, then the anti-bullying policy will be applied. The College will further explore the situation and apply the appropriate sanctions required.

Recording Information

Alleged bullying behaviour inside and outside of the College must be recorded using the Bullying Concern Assessment Form and added to the SIMS record of the students' affected. This will be done by the Head of Year for the student who is alleged to be displaying bullying behaviour. It is a legal requirement to include the following information in every recorded instance:

- where the incident occurred;
- the motivating factors (where known);
- the methods (i.e. verbal, written, electronic or a combination of some/all);
- how it has been addressed.

The reasoning behind recording information is to ensure that pupils are looked after, feel safe and a positive learning environment is maintained. Recording information allows the College to:

- identify patterns of behaviour;
- promote inclusive practice by identifying and meeting the needs of individuals and groups;
- evaluate the effectiveness of positive behaviour management strategies;
- ensure that intervention, strategies and procedures are implemented effectively;
- track instances of bullying behaviour.

Processing Information

When an alleged bullying incident has been reported to the College, it will be investigated. When there is a first instance of bullying being reported, the Form Tutor and/or Head of Year will start the proceedings and investigate. They will gather all the appropriate information from students involved and/or students who have information about the incident.
All students that are spoken to will be listened to respectively. Upon hearing all the necessary information, the College will keep parents/carers and staff members informed, when appropriate.
Part 1 of the Bullying Concern Assessment Form (found in Appendix 1) will be completed by the Form Tutor and/or Head of Year of the student who allegedly is displaying bullying behaviour.
Upon reviewing all the information/evidence that has been gathered, the Head of Year, in conjunction with the Form Tutor, will come to a final decision as to whether the behaviour being investigated meets the legal criteria of bullying as laid out in the definition at the start of this policy.

Any bullying behaviour displayed towards a student who has Special Educational Needs will involve the SENCO.

The College recognises that not all socially unacceptable behaviour is bullying behaviour. Equally, not all unacceptable behaviour online is cyber bullying. All members of the College community must participate in the development of the shared understanding of what does and does not constitute bullying behaviour.

As such, the College recognises the need to work on an on-going basis with students and parents/carers to help them understand the implications of bullying behaviour.

Alleged bullying and/or socially unacceptable behaviour which the College decides does not meet the legal criteria of bullying will be dealt with through the College's Positive Behaviour Policy. Alleged bullying behaviour which the College decides does meet the legal criteria of bullying will be dealt with through the Anti-Bullying Policy and the remainder of the Bullying Concern Assessment Form will be completed and uploaded to SIMs along with any other written evidence collated by either the Form Tutor or Head of Year

Any parent/carer who is unhappy with how an incident has been dealt with by College staff should contact the Principal who will deal with the issue in line with the College's Complaints Policy.

Professional Development of Staff

Wellington College is committed to ensuring that all staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions to address the prevention, early detection and addressing of bullying within the College.

Governors will also receive safeguarding training which will include the College's anti-bullying measures.

Records of CPD will be kept and updated regularly

Monitoring and Review of Policy

It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors, in liaison with the Principal, to monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy.
To appropriately monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors shall:
- maintain a standing item on the Pastoral Care Report where recorded incidents of bullying will be noted;
- identify trends and priorities for action;
- assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at preventing bullying behaviour;
- assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at responding to bullying behaviour.
- review the Anti-Bullying Policy every 4 years.

Links to Other Policies

The following policies should be read alongside the Anti-Bullying Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Special Educational Needs Policy;
- Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy;
- E-Safety Policy & Acceptable Use of Internet Policy;

ROUTES OF REFERRAL FOR RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF BULLYING

Incident of alleged bullying is received, recorded and referred if neccesary

Incident of alleged bullying is responded to by the relevant Head of Year.

Bullying Concern Assessment Form completed.

A decision is made on the route of action.

Follow up response is co-ordinated with The Vice Principal.

Support given to those displaying and affected by behviour.

Sanctions, if appropriate applied to students displaying bullying behaviour.

At all stages, students involved in the incident and their parents/carers are kept informed

Appendix 1

Bullying Concern Assessment Form

The definition of Bullying as laid out in the Addressing Bullying in School Act (Northern Ireland 2016) bullying includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use of -

- any verbal, written or electronic communication;
- any other act (including exclusion and omission);
- or any combination of those.

By a student or a group of students against another student or group of students, with the intention of causing physical or emotional harm to that student or group of students.

Incident Date:_____

Students Involved	Role	Incident Date	Gender	DOB	Year and Reg

Outline of incident(s): Attach all written accounts/drawings of incident(s) completed by targeted student, witnesses (i.e. other students, staff) including date(s) of events, if known, SIMS record.

Date	Information gathered	Location (stored)

Socially unacceptable behaviour becomes bullying behaviour when, on the basis of the information gathered, the criteria listed below have been met:

The school will treat any incident which meets these criteria as bullying behaviours.

Is the behaviour intentional?	**YES / NO**
Is the behaviour targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils?	**YES / NO**
Is the behaviour repeated?	**YES / NO**
Is the behaviour causing physical or emotional harm?	**YES / NO**
Does the behaviour involve omission? (*may not always be present)	**YES / NO**

YES, the above criteria have been met and bullying behaviour has occurred.	**NO, the above criteria have not been met and bullying behaviour has not occurred.**
The criteria having been met, proceed to complete Stage 2 of the process.	The criteria having not been met, proceed to record the details in the Behaviour Incident section of SIMS. Refer to the Positive Behaviour Policy and continue to track and monitor to ensure the behaviour does not escalate.
Outcome of incident (include support offered, sanctions applied and any review of measures)	

Agreed by _____

Role _____

On ___/___/___