

# ABBEY CHRISTIAN BROTHERS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL



## POLICY ON ANTI - BULLYING

Revised 2014/15

## **Review Process:**

**The following documents have been consulted in the review:**

- **Judgement in the Court Case Ryan Collins vs Trustees of the Abbey Christian Brothers' Grammar School**
- **Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour NIABF 2013**
- **Abbey SEN Policy**
- **Abbey Behaviour Policy**
- **Abbey Pastoral Care in Senior School Policy**
- **Abbey Child Protection Policy**

**The following consultation has taken place:**

- **Meeting with ETI Inspector Madeline Mason 5<sup>th</sup> September 2014**
- **SMT Meeting Dromantine College 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2013**
- **Staff consultation Dec 2014 – including Pastoral Team 19<sup>th</sup> Dec 2014**
- **Pupil consultation – May 2015**
- **Parental consultation – Feb 2015 – Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March (Meeting)**
- **Examined from a legal perspective by Elliot Trainor Partnership June 2015**
- **Examined from a content perspective by Yvonne Murtagh (Education Authority) August 2015**
- **Approved by Board of Governors June 2015**

# **ABBAY CHRISTIAN BROTHERS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

## **POLICY ON ANTI - BULLYING**

### **THE AIMS OF THIS POLICY:**

This policy aims to:

**clarify what bullying is**

**emphasise to parents, students and staff that bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in the Abbey**

**identify the ways in which the school does and will tackle bullying in a pro-active manner**

**suggest ways in which bullying activity can be identified**

**state the school structures and procedures for the handling of incidents of bullying**

**outline the manner in which our success in this area should be evaluated.**

**This policy does not stand in isolation but has links to other policies e.g. Child Protection, Pastoral Care, Behaviour Policies and Procedures among others**

### **What is Bullying?**

Bullying is repeated and wilful activity by an individual or group in which power is exerted over another in order to intimidate or dominate. Characteristically the target experiences fear, hurt or threat as a result.

**PHYSICAL:** hitting, kicking, taking or hiding belongings, extortion.

**VERBAL:** name calling, teasing, 'slagging' or 'scoffing' , ridicule of appearance, speaking, disability, personal mannerisms, race, colour, religion.

**EMOTIONAL:** being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, spreading rumours, looks, gestures.

**SEXUAL / HOMOPHOBIC:** sexually insulting language, gestures or physical contact based on a person's sexuality or perceived sexuality

**TECHNOLOGICAL:** cyber bullying be it text message, picture message, website messages or social media

Some of these activities, such as scoffing or hiding belongings may be viewed by the perpetrators as 'just a bit of fun', whilst the victim experiences distress. This is particularly true for personalised slugging which is unacceptable. If the target experiences hurt this should be the guiding factor in further action to be taken.

### **Bullying is not acceptable in the Abbey**

In the Abbey we do not accept bullying behaviour from students and encourage everybody to report it.

- This issue will be regularly raised at assemblies
- The school takes part in NIABF Anti – Bullying week
- Students who bully will receive sanctions from the school
- Parents will be informed where a student is displaying bullying behaviour
- The homework diary sets out our procedure for dealing with bullying
- A notice board in school shows who students can report bullying concerns to
- Our website includes information regarding anti - bullying

### **How the school tackles bullying in a pro-active manner**

Despite the best efforts of the authorities, teachers and pupils, bullying can be a problem in some schools. In the Abbey, we make all reasonable efforts to ensure that we will respond appropriately and proportionately to all allegations of bullying, and that we remain fully informed and up to date regarding anti-bullying strategies and techniques to try and ensure that student welfare is maintained to its current high standard.

**The Abbey is committed to pro-actively preventing the occurrence of bullying by:**

**fostering an ethos in the school which reinforces understanding and acceptance of others, their feelings and their rights (e.g. through Pastoral Discipline; positive relationships teacher/pupil, teacher/teacher, pupil/pupil)**

**all staff modelling respectful treatment of others in their relationships with pupils and colleagues as indicated in Form Teacher and Year Tutor documentation.**

**incorporating co-operative activities in all classes but particularly in LLW (e.g. quality circles; groupwork)**

**once per term and also as the need arises completing the confidential survey in Form Class**

**creating amongst our students a willingness to be open in discussion with staff when bullying occurs**

**ensuring that areas where students spend break and lunchtime are properly supervised and allowing student input in to this e.g. students to identify on school map areas that they feel vulnerable**

**devoting staff development time to the issue on a regular basis**

**empowering pupils to take positive action against bullying e.g. coping and assertiveness strategies and making use of the school counsellor.**

### **Signs of stress in students which may indicate bullying?**

Students who are being bullied may show one or more of the following signs:-

- bruises which are not satisfactorily explained
- changes in behaviour e.g. becoming shy or nervous
- feigning illness
- being alone
- stresses at home
- a change in work patterns
- drop in academic standards
- unwillingness to attend school/lateness/erratic attendance
- lacking concentration
- truanting
- "losing" possessions

**\* It should be noted that the above is not a definitive list**

### **How should incidents of bullying be dealt with?**

The Abbey's approach to dealing with a bullying situation will be sensitive, swift, age – appropriate, reasonable and proportionate. It will be an initial listening approach in

order to establish facts and also an understanding of the sensitivities and impact of the bullying behaviour.

The Year Tutor of the targeted pupil will listen carefully to the events recounted by the student. They will be reassuring that the matter will be addressed. This will happen even if the information has not come directly from this pupil but instead from a parent, member of staff or another pupil.

Based on the events recounted and the impact on the student the Year Tutor (in conjunction with the Senior Teacher or Vice Principal if needed) should make a decision on which level of intervention to use.

The Headmaster will be aware of all bullying issues in school through the daily SMT morning meeting and the weekly Pastoral Team meeting (attendance and/or minutes)

### **How will policy be evaluated?**

The effectiveness of this policy will be evaluated annually by SMT

The key aim of all anti-bullying policies should be to ensure the welfare of students. Opinions and feedback will be sought from all appropriate and relevant agencies and individuals involved in the school's anti-bullying procedure to ensure that the policy is effective in safeguarding and protecting the welfare of students and will be reviewed annually to ensure that student welfare in the school remains at an appropriately high level.

In order to do this the following will be needed:

- Opinion sought from staff involved in working the policy
- Opinion sought from pupils
- Opinion sought from parents
- Use of data gathered throughout the year to record incidents at each level and whether or not the intervention was effective
- A written report presented to the Board of Governors annually (June meeting)
- Serious, unresolved or persistent issues to be reported to the BoG as a matter of course.

### **Concerning but not bullying behaviour**

If the Year Tutor feels that the behaviour does not fit the definition of bullying or does not merit a level 1 intervention, they can still act to remedy the situation. This should involve, with the consent of the targeted pupil, speaking to the other student to outline that there is an initial concern that some of the potential signs of a bullying relationship have emerged.

The Year Tutor should outline to the pupil that their actions are unwanted by the other pupil. It is essential that there is a shared empathy as well as an understanding that any continuation of the behaviour would merit a level 1 intervention. Such an approach would be useful if the behaviour has been similar between both pupils but one has escalated the situation and hurt has been caused. This could be any type of behaviour outlined under the definition of bullying but which up to this point had been a two way process.

It is likely that in trying to decide whether to label a relationship as an example of bullying, a number of the techniques in level 1 may be used simply to inform the Year Tutor about the situation

Parents are not informed at this stage.

**It is important to remember that every bullying incident should be individually assessed and an intervention chosen which best meets the individual pupil needs. Crucial to this will be the impact on the targeted pupil, the reasons for the behaviour and the level of confidence of the member of staff in achieving an effective lasting solution.**

### **Appeal**

If a pupil feels that their situation has not been fully understood by the Year Tutor or that the intervention or non –intervention by the Year Tutor has not solved the problem then they should report the situation to the Vice Principal or Senior Teacher responsible for Middle School.

**There are four levels of intervention which are available and depending on the nature, duration and complexity of the bullying. Knowledge of the pupils involved and the level of confidence in a satisfactory outcome can also be a deciding factor.**

## **Level 1 – Low level interventions for bullying behaviour**

**This may take the form of name calling, excluding or minor physical contact which although repeated has not been persistent over a long period of time**

Interventions at Level 1 are to help individuals to recognise and reflect on their unacceptable behaviour and to “get them back on track” while listening to and supporting the pupil experiencing bullying.

Staff should explain the inappropriateness of the behaviour in line with the school’s values and identify possible consequences if the bullying behaviour continues. It is important to point out the level of distress experienced by the targeted pupil. It is expected that staff would talk with the pupil being bullied to explore whether they can identify any behaviour of their own which may have brought about this situation. Staff will help the targeted pupil to identify ways in which he may be supported e.g. peer support. Staff should encourage repairing the relationship and monitor the situation carefully.

If the situation persists or deteriorates, a higher level intervention will begin.

**Parents are informed at this stage**



Intervention Table – Level 1

<b>Pupil Displaying Bullying Behaviour</b>	<b>The Pastoral Curriculum</b>	<b>Interventions</b>	<b>Targeted Pupil</b>	<b>Target Interventions</b>
<p>When the bullying behaviour has been assessed and is perceived to be minor or a first time occurrence select one or more of these Level 1 interventions.</p> <p><b>Parents will be informed of this decision.</b></p>	<p>Select whole-class approaches such as circle time to explore issues around bullying and identify possible solutions in a non-threatening way enabling views to be acknowledged, respected and valued.</p>	<p>One of the five methods below may be used by the Year Tutor</p> <p><b>Interview intervention:</b> Formally remind the pupil of the harm his behaviour is causing another and of the negative consequences. The pupil will be encouraged to change his behaviour.</p> <p><b>Restorative Questioning:</b> The five sequential, self-reflective, restorative questions enable the pupil who is bullying to take responsibility for his behaviour and undertake appropriate action to promote reparation</p> <p><b>Worth a Re-Think:</b> This process helps pupils to develop more appropriate responses to a range of situations through reflecting on happenings, thoughts, feelings, behaviour and consequences</p> <p><b>Shared Control Discussion:</b> This five step intervention requires the pupil to choose how he will respond to requests to change behaviour through being made aware of the consequences of his unacceptable behaviour.</p> <p><b>Think Time Discussion Sheet:</b> Completing this encourages the pupil to reflect on his/her negative behaviour; identify how to rectify the situation and act accordingly. This discussion may inform a behaviour plan.</p>	<p>The level of concern is low.</p> <p>Annoyance is being caused but not distress</p>	<p>Informal chat to enable pupil to identify possible solutions to current situation.</p> <p><b>Parental support will be sought at this stage.</b></p> <p>The pupil may wish to use Buddy /Peer Mediation support</p> <p>Regular monitoring and review of situation by teachers.</p> <p>Referral to school counsellor and/or member of safeguarding team.</p>
<p><b>Sanctions:</b> Sanctions may be applied at this stage. Contact with home could be an appropriate sanction.</p>				

## **Level 2 – Intermediate Level Interventions for Bullying Behaviour**

**This may take the form of insulting name calling or physical contact which is persistent over a period of time. This may involve one person or a group of people.**

While interventions at Level 2 involve continuing with the above, there is a shift from individual support to group interventions. Small group work will have the consent and/or involvement of the pupil being bullied. This work should take place in an appropriate environment without time constraints. The School Board Room is an appropriate venue. Parents of those involved will not be informed.

This meeting will take place in a positive manner and the focus of the discussions should be to establish empathy and understanding and with a clear solution in mind. There should be a good debate about the issues involved and the group should establish an identity involving accepting responsibility. All decisions and outcomes must be recorded.

The mechanism for monitoring and reviewing the outcomes should be explained to the group.

If the situation persists or deteriorates, a higher level intervention will begin.

**Parental support is requested at this stage**

Intervention Table – Level 2

<b>Pupil Displaying Bullying Behaviour</b>	<b>The Pastoral Curriculum</b>	<b>Interventions</b>	<b>Targeted Pupil</b>	<b>Target Interventions</b>
<p>Following assessment if the bullying behaviour continues or is considered more severe, select one or more of these Level 2 interventions.</p> <p>If the Year Tutor feels it appropriate, a meeting may occur without the pupil present.</p> <p><b>Parents/carers will need to be informed of this decision and involved in providing support.</b></p>	<p>Select whole-class approaches such as circle time to explore issues around bullying and identify possible solutions in a non-threatening way enabling views to be acknowledged, respected and valued.</p>	<p><b>SMALL GROUP INTERVENTIONS</b></p> <p><b>THE SUPPORT GROUP METHOD</b> This is a seven step, participative long-term approach which supports the targeted pupil, involves volunteers from the peer groups of both the targeted pupil and the young person displaying bullying behaviour and focuses on changing the behaviour of the pupil that is bullying and those who collude with him.</p> <p><b>QUALITY CIRCLES</b> (unlikely to be used in specific cases but more of a holistic approach)</p> <p>Volunteers meet regularly with a member of staff to explore issues surrounding bullying e.g. exclusion, homophobia. They can develop, suggest and present solutions to SMT</p>	<p>The level of concern is evident.</p> <p>Annoyance and some emotional upset is being caused.</p>	<p>Gain the targeted pupil's consent to discuss with his peers in his absence.</p> <p>Agree, teach and practice coping skills</p> <p><b>Parental support will be sought at this stage.</b></p> <p>The pupil may wish to use Buddy /Peer Mediation support</p> <p>Regular monitoring and review of situation by teachers.</p> <p>Referral to school counsellor and/or member of safeguarding team.</p>
<p><b>Sanctions:</b> It is expected that sanctions will be imposed at this stage. These may include, contact with home, Form Teacher detention, Year Tutor detention or suspension among others.</p>				

### **Level 3 – Intervention for Complex Bullying Behaviour**

**This may take the form of bullying behaviour in which the reasons for the behaviour are entrenched and may have a parental or external influence**

Interventions at Level 3 will often involve a Senior Teacher, Vice Principal and SENCO if appropriate and will operate in collaboration with parents to determine the way forward in affecting change. If it is needed, assistance may also be sought through external agencies e.g. SELB. Bullying at this level often involves complex group dynamics, where a number of roles are evident, such as those displaying bullying behaviour, bystanders and pupils experiencing bullying. Consequently interventions may require a variety of responses e.g. one-to-one meetings, small group work and whole class involvement. These will often require group interventions as outlined in Level 2 along with individual support.

If the situation persists or deteriorates, a higher level intervention will begin.

**Parental involvement is essential at this stage**

Intervention Table – Level 3

<b>Pupil Displaying Bullying Behaviour</b>	<b>The Pastoral Curriculum</b>	<b>Interventions:</b>	<b>Targeted Pupil</b>	<b>Target Interventions</b>
<p>Following assessment, if the bullying behaviour is more complex or pupils are resistant to change a level 3 intervention may be needed.</p> <p>Pupil presenting with many additional needs and risk factors.</p> <p><b>Parental involvement essential</b></p>	<p>Select whole-class approaches such as circle time to explore issues around bullying and identify possible solutions in a non-threatening way enabling views to be acknowledged, respected and valued.</p>	<p>The interventions at level 1 and 2 can be repeated</p> <p>Individual pupil intervention - monitoring by key member of staff e.g. Year Tutor, Senior Teacher or Vice Principal</p> <p>Behaviour Management Programmes: Individual Behaviour Plan (support and strengthening), target setting with incentives and consequences.</p> <p>Social and Emotional Mentoring by an identified member of staff.</p> <p>Individualised strength and emotional well-being building programmes eg: conflict resolution / solution focussed conversations / empathy training, mood and anger management</p> <p>Peer support/befriending/mentoring/mediation.</p> <p>Independent Counselling Service for Schools. Contact SELB.</p>	<p>The level of concern is high.</p> <p>Emotional upset and distress are evident.</p>	<p>Individual Pupil Work</p> <p>Monitoring by key member of staff and Individual Support Plan</p> <p><b>Parental Involvement essential</b></p> <p>Additional advice and support may be sought from SELB Services and External Agencies</p> <p>Referral to school counsellor and/or member of safeguarding team.</p>
<p><b>Sanctions:</b> It is expected that sanctions will be imposed at this stage. These may include contact with home, Year Tutor detention, internal exclusion or suspension among others.</p>				

#### **Level 4 – Intervention for High Risk Bullying behaviour**

**This may take the form of an immediate threat to the physical or mental well-being of a student which would be categorised as a serious mental health, criminal or child protection concern**

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 all of the pupils involved. As such, the Abbey's Child Protection policy and safeguarding procedures will need to be invoked. If the behaviour is persistent, there needs to be a clear assessment of why previous interventions have not been successful. In light of this the interventions at level 2 and 3 should continue as well as referrals for external support.

**Parental involvement is essential at this stage**

Intervention Table – Level 4

<b>Pupil Displaying Bullying Behaviour</b>	<b>The Pastoral Curriculum</b>	<b>Interventions:</b>	<b>Targeted Pupil</b>	<b>Target Interventions</b>
<p>Following assessment, if the bullying behaviour is more complex and/or pupils are resistant to change a level 4 intervention may be needed.</p> <p>Pupil presenting with significant concerns including mental health, criminal and/or child protection concerns.</p>	<p>Select whole-class approaches such as circle time to explore issues around bullying and identify possible solutions in a non-threatening way enabling views to be acknowledged, respected and valued.</p>	<p>Refer to relevant investigative agencies:</p> <p>PSNI Health and Social Care Trust Gateway Teams.</p> <p>Refer to the school’s Discipline Policy and scheme for the suspension and expulsion of pupils.</p> <p>Involvement of the Board of Governors</p>	<p>Pupil presenting with significant mental health, criminal and/or child protection concerns.</p>	<p>Refer to relevant investigative agencies: PSNI Health and Social Care Trust Gateway Teams</p> <p>Referral to school counsellor and/or member of safeguarding team.</p>
<p><b>Sanctions:</b> It is expected that sanctions will be imposed at this stage. These may include internal exclusion, suspension or expulsion among others.</p>				

## **Monitoring of interventions**

The key aim of our anti-bullying policy is to ensure the welfare of all students. The policy will be reviewed annually, in addition to evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention following each bullying concern.

Consultation will be conducted with all appropriate stakeholders to ensure that the policy is effective in safeguarding and protecting the welfare of all students.

## **Record Keeping**

The Year Tutor, Senior Teacher and VP should keep a record of the outcome of the intervention. At the end of the year, Year Tutors will be asked to provide information as to how many interventions at each level they have had and the level of success. A report is to be compiled for SMT annually.

## **Staff Development.**

- Whole staff awareness of this policy
- Whole staff understanding of the approach and effects of bullying
- Specific Year Tutor development in the approach.

## **Advice for pupils and parents.**

Advice for pupils on bullying will, be given in their homework diary (Appendix A, Advice for Pupils).

Advice for Parents on bullying will be given in the form of a leaflet (Appendix B Advice for Parents), and a summary of the policy.



**APPENDIX A**  
**SUMMARY FOR PUPILS**

**(To be included in the homework diary alongside who to contact for Child Protection concerns)**

As a student in the Abbey you are entitled to feel safe, free from harm or non-welcome comments or behaviour. If at any stage you feel that you are experiencing unwelcome or unwarranted attention you should report this to your Form Teacher, Year Tutor, School nurse, school counsellor, Mr Ruddy, Mrs McGrath, Mr O'Shea or any member of staff.

If it is clear that you are experiencing bullying behaviour the school has a variety of options that it can follow.

In the Abbey we define bullying as:

*Bullying is repeated and wilful activity by an individual or group in which power is exerted over another in order to intimidate or dominate. Characteristically the victim experiences fear, hurt or threat as a result.*

*Bullying can take different forms: verbal, physical, emotional, sexual – homophobic, electronic among others.*

Where bullying has been reported this will be fully investigated and the Year Tutor will have four levels of response available:

Level 1 for less serious issues will involve the Year Tutor dealing with the bully mostly on a one to one basis with the focus of getting the behaviour stopped and relationships repaired. There may be punishment issued and there will be contact with the parents of both students. Counselling support will be offered.

Level 2 for more serious or repeated issues will involve the Year Tutor dealing with the bully and a group of classmates with the focus of getting the behaviour stopped and relationships repaired. There will be punishment issued and there will be involvement by the parents of both students. Counselling support will be offered.

Level 3 for very serious or repeated issues will involve the Vice Principal dealing with the bully and a group of classmates with the focus of getting the behaviour stopped and relationships repaired. Steps taken at stage one and two may be used again. Punishment will be severe and parents will have to be involved. Counselling support will be offered.

Level 4 for very serious or repeated issues will involve outside agencies such as Child Protection Services and the PSNI. The Board of Governors will be involved and the bully's place in the school will be reviewed to see if he is allowed to remain.

**Useful Points of Contact.**

The Abbey Christian Brothers' Grammar School: 028 3026 3142  
*Mr Ruddy / Mr O'Shea / Mrs McGrath*  
*Your Year Tutor / Form Teacher or any member of staff*

The Abbey Counselling Service: 028 3026 3142  
*Ms Fiona Hughes*