

# Blackwater Integrated College



## Anti Bullying Policy

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## **1 1.1: INTRODUCTION**

Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It also affects those other children who watch, and less aggressive students can be drawn in by group pressure. Bullying is not an inevitable part of school life or a necessary part of growing up, and it rarely sorts itself out.

It is clear that certain jokes, insults, intimidating and threatening behaviour, written abuse and violence are to be found in our society. No one person or group, whether staff or student, 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 College.

## **1.2: RATIONALE**

Blackwater Integrated College believes that its students have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied.

All institutions, both large and small, contain some numbers of students with the potential for bullying behaviour. If a school is well structured and organised, it can minimise the occurrence of bullying. The College also has a clear policy on the promotion of good relationships, behaviour and child protection, where it is made clear that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour. It is **WRONG** and will not be tolerated.

It is important therefore that the College has a clear written policy to promote this belief, where both students and parents/guardians are fully aware that any bullying complaints will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly.

## 2 2.1: WHAT IS BULLYING?

*“Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour repeated often over a period of time, where it is difficult for the victim to defend him or herself”* Department of Education 1999

Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour. It can be:-

- **PHYSICAL** A child can be physically punched, kicked, hit, spat at etc.
- **VERBAL** Verbal abuse can take the form of name calling. It may be directed towards gender, ethnic origin, physical/social disability, or personality, etc.
- **EMOTIONAL** Persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection, resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child.
- **EXCLUSION** A child can be bullied simply by being excluded from discussions/activities, by those they believe to be their friends.
- **DAMAGE TO PROPERTY OR THEFT** Students may have their property damaged or stolen. Physical threats may be used by the bully in order that the student hand over property to them.
- **CYBER** Abusive/threatening or hurtful texts, e-mails, letters or facebook posts etc.

## **2.2: WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED?**

Remember that ***your*** silence is the bully's greatest weapon! Talk to someone, let them know, break the silence.

- Generally it is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support.
- 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 an 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!" and 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.

Staff will take you seriously and will deal with bullies in a way which will end the bullying and will not make things worse for you.

## **2.3 : WHAT CAN DO IF YOU ARE A VICTIM OF CYBERBULLYING?**

- Make sure only good friends and family are in your social media, phone or e-mail address books.
- Always be careful about who you give or lend your mobile to and who you give your number to.
- If you really like using social media, you could sign up again with a different ID – use a nickname and do not give any of your personal information.
- If you keep receiving nasty messages. Take a break from your phone or social media for a few days.

- If you receive repeated nasty messages, keep a record and print them.
- Never reply to the bully or send a nastier message back.
- If you start getting bullied through your phone. Your mobile phone provider can help by changing your number.
- Most social networking sites have a complaint procedures. They can bar unwanted messages to your account.
- You can inform the PSNI about any form of Cyberbullying.
- Keep telling yourself, 'Bullying is wrong, it is not my fault and I am not putting up with it!'. You are not alone.
- Always tell someone you trust what is happening.

### **3 3.1: IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE IS BEING BULLIED**

#### **BREAK THE SILENCE:**

- 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.
- Remind the victim that the 'Bully' is in the wrong and encourage them to tell a member of staff.
- If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult IMMEDIATELY. Staff have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you into trouble.
- If you do not want to be seen telling a member of staff; write it down on a piece of paper and put it into the "**Post Box**" outside the Pastoral office. A member of staff will act upon the information given.
- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.

### **3.2: AS A PARENT**

- 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 College 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 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 College's policy concerning bullying, and that they will not be afraid to ask for help.

#### **4 4.1: AS A SCHOOL**

##### **WE WILL:**

- Organise the College community in order to minimise opportunities for bullying, eg, provide increased supervision at problem times.
- Use any opportunity to discuss aspects of bullying, and the appropriate way to behave towards each other, e.g. the Personal development programme and assemblies.
- Deal quickly, firmly and fairly with any complaints, involving parents where necessary.
- Review the Anti-Bullying Policy bi-annually
- Maintain a firm but fair discipline structure. The rules are few, simple and easy to understand.
- Not use teaching materials or equipment which give a bad or negative view of any group because of their ethnic origin, sex, etc.
- Encourage students to discuss how they get on with other people and to form positive attitudes towards other people. This includes a review of what friendship really is.
- Encourage students to treat everyone with respect.

- Treat bullying as a serious offence and take every possible action to eradicate it from our College.
- Cooperate with the PSNI in dealing with Cyberbullying.
- Record Sanctions on Behavior Manager
- Record Interventions on SIMS

#### **4.2: ACTION TO BE TAKEN WHEN BULLYING IS SUSPECTED.**

- If bullying is suspected we will talk to the suspected victim, the suspected bully 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 victims and the bully:

### **5 5.1: WE SUPPORT THE VICTIM IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS**

- by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with their Form Tutor or another member of staff if they choose.
- by informing the victim's parents/guardians.
- by offering a bullying diary
- By offering a quiet room at break/lunch
- by offering support through counselling
- by offering the support of a "Peer Buddy" or "Peer Group"
- by offering continuing support when they feel they need it.

- by arranging for them to be escorted to and from the College premises.
- by arranging for them to be escorted between classes.
- by taking one or more of the eight disciplinary steps described below to prevent further bullying.

**5.2: WE ALSO DISCIPLINE, YET TRY TO HELP THE BULLY IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:**

- by talking about what happened, to discover why they became involved.
- by informing the bully's parents/guardians.
- by continuing to work with the bully in order to get rid of prejudiced attitudes as far as possible.
- by taking one or more of the eight disciplinary steps described below to prevent further bullying.

**5.3: DISCIPLINARY STEPS**

- They will be warned officially to stop offending
- We will inform the bully's parents/guardians by phone or letter
- Sanctions such as break, lunch or after school detention will be put in place
- If bullying continues the bully may be isolated from class
- If they do not stop bullying, they may be suspended for a fixed period (one or two days)
- We may ask for them to be escorted to and from the College premises
- If they then carry on they will be recommended for suspension for a longer fixed period (up to five days) or an indefinite period

- If they will not end such behaviour, they will be recommended for permanent exclusion (expulsion).

## **6 EXAMPLES OF STRATEGIES USED IN BLACKWATER INTEGRATED COLLEGE:**

- An open and expressive communicative environment
- Pastoral System
- Peer Buddy Systems
- Bullying Diary
- Youth Initiatives
- Quiet Room
- Personal Development Programme
- Counselling
- Anti bullying week
- External speakers highlighting relationships

## **7 MONITOR & REVIEW OF THE POLICY**

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Pastoral Coordinator, Heads of Junior/Senior School and Form Tutors and will be reviewed bi-annually.