



BLESSED TRINITY COLLEGE

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2021

1. Introduction & Rationale

This policy has been developed in line with Blessed Trinity College’s vision, mission statement, moral purpose, expectations & core values, 2003 Statutory Requirements (Education & Libraries NI Order) which requires the Board of Governors and school to liaise appropriately with key stakeholders (students, parents/carers & staff) regarding positive behaviour and bullying prevention measures which are in place, in addition to The Addressing Bullying In Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016,

Specific articles of the Legislation include the following:

- **Article 17- Duty to Safeguard & Promote the Welfare of the Students**
- **Article 18- Child Protection Measures**
- **Article 19- School Discipline: Measures to Prevent Bullying**

2. Definition of Bullying

Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 defines bullying as follows:

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, or
- (c) 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.

2. For the purposes of subsection (1), “act” includes omission”

The term bullying refers to a range of harmful behaviors, both physical and psychological. Examples may include;

- **Physical bullying** (includes jostling, physical intimidation, punching/kicking, any other physical contact which may include use of weapons).
- **Verbal bullying** (includes name calling, insults, jokes, threats, spreading rumours)
- **Indirect bullying** (includes isolation, refusal to work with/talk to/play with/help others, interfering with personal property) and includes Cyber-bullying: misusing mobile phones and internet programs to humiliate, threaten &/ isolate another.

Students may be targeted on the basis of race, religion, culture, gender, perceived sexual presentation, sexual orientation – inclusive of transgender, and educational ability.

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 student?	Yes/No
Is the behaviour repeated?	Yes/No
Is the behaviour causing physical or emotional harm?	Yes/No
Does the behaviour include omission? (*may not always be present)	Yes/No

3. Related School Policies

Within Blessed Trinity College, student care & welfare embraces all aspects of pastoral care, including safeguarding & child protection, student behaviour, health and well-being, safety and security. Our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of students is addressed & reinforced through other policies also e.g. Positive Behaviour for Learning, Safeguarding & Child Protection, Drugs, Relationships & Sexuality Education, Acceptable ICT usage etc.

4. Guiding Principles

The values that Blessed Trinity College holds are based on the following principles:

- Our students have a right to learn in a safe and supportive environment, free from intimidation and fear.
- The welfare/well-being needs of all children and young people are paramount, and students' needs - whether student presenting bullying-type behaviours or targeted student – need to be separated from their behaviour.
- When bullying-type concerns are identified, our school will work in a restorative and solution focused way to bring about improvement.
- Students who have concerns about bullying-type behaviour will be listened to and supported.
- Students who engage in bullying-type behaviour will be listened to, supported to accept responsibility and encouraged to change their behaviour.
- Staff will use guidance in this policy regarding bullying prevention, including effective, appropriate strategies for intervention, as appropriate.
- Where a concern arises, staff will receive support &/ guidance from the AHoY, HoY, AVP, VP and Principal, as appropriate.
- Parents/carers will be made aware of our approaches to prevent bullying, and to respond to concerns through parent meetings, and, where necessary, working in partnership with the school to resolve concerns involving their child.

5. The Process of Participation & Consultation

- A Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy is in place and has been signed by all parents/carers and students.
- The school will continue to address the importance of respect for others through the Pastoral Development programme delivered during Form Class and through discrete LLW provision at KS3.
- The school is involved in raising awareness during NI Anti-Bullying Week.
- Staff will be kept up to date in relation to anti-bullying legislation changes/recommendations etc, as required.
- Anti-bullying intervention strategies are monitored by Year Group Care Teams, to identify and implement improvements, as appropriate.
- AVP referral reports facilitate the collation of data in relation to bullying allegations.

6. Prevention Measures

- Publication of the Anti-Bullying Policy
- Provision within the Pastoral Care of the school; having a coherent and consistent framework to address bullying incidents
- A welcoming ethos and atmosphere which is built on the foundations of our core values:
 - **Care & Inclusion**
 - **Respect & Responsibility**
 - **Aspiration & Expectation**

The principles of inclusivity, respect for others, and embracing diversity within our school culture are embedded within our school mission statement of **Achieving Excellence Together**.

- Blessed Trinity College expectations, core values & classroom management practices (as per our Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy & Excellence in Learning & Teaching Policy) encourage a restorative & supportive ethos, rather than a punitive approach
- Curriculum content within KS3 LLW has a commitment to anti-bullying
- Staff supervision, encouraging positive group dynamics & inclusion, is provided during break and lunch
- Ongoing tracking and monitoring of supervision arrangements e.g. canteen, playground, corridors, toilets etc
- Reward systems are in place which encourage good behaviour and conduct within the school community, by acknowledging & celebrating achievement and success in all areas of school life
- Active collaboration with transport providers e.g. Translink
- Co-ordination with Collaboration Schools to outline expectations, as appropriate
- Parent events e.g. Parent Teacher Consultations, Induction Programmes etc.
- Assemblies, Student Voice Focus Groups, Anti-Bullying Week, Safer Internet Day etc. are used to reinforce the key messages of our expectations & core values to students and staff
- Weekly AVP & HoY meeting to address year group specific issues
- SLT AVP DT Referral Reports & Vulnerable Student Update model
- Involvement of outside support agencies for vulnerable students, as appropriate
- Involvement of outside support agencies for groups of students who are experiencing social difficulties

7. Responsibilities of all Stakeholders

Blessed Trinity College staff will:

- Foster in our students a sense of positive self-regard & self-esteem, a sense of their rights and their responsibilities to others > a focus on ACTIONS & CONSEQUENCES approach.
- Demonstrate by example, the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect from our students.
- Discuss unacceptable behaviour with classes, as appropriate, so that students learn about the damage it can cause to both the student who is targeted, and the student who engages in/displays bullying-type behaviour.
- Ensure students are aware of who they can talk to if they have any concerns – visible reminder via our Care Team posters.
- Be alert to signs of distress &/ other possible indications of a student being targeted.
- Listen to students who report concerns; take what they say seriously and respond appropriately.
- Investigate parental concerns & respond accordingly.

We expect our students to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying-type behaviour.
- Report any concerns to a member of staff to help to prevent further instances.

We expect our parents/carers to support their children and the school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children.
- Advising their children to report any unacceptable behaviour or concerns to their Form Teacher/AHoY/HoY/AVP – Care Team.
- Advising their children not to retaliate aggressively to any form of bullying-type behaviour.
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken.
- Co-operating & communicating with the school, as appropriate

8. Procedures for Dealing with Incidents of Bullying

There are deemed to be 4 levels of bullying behaviour as outlined below:

Level 1- Low Level Bullying Behaviour - Adults responsible- Form Teacher, in consultation with Care Team

Level 2- Intermediate Level Bullying Behaviour- Adults responsible- Care Team

Level 3- Complex Bullying Behaviour- Adults responsible- AVP, SENCO and parents/carers

Level 4- High Risk Bullying Behaviour- Adults responsible- AVP, VP &/ Principal

The main aim of any intervention is to **RESPOND** to the bullying-type behaviour that is taking place, **RESOLVE** the concern and **RESTORE** the well-being of all those involved.

In selecting an intervention, the following will be considered:

- * The level of severity
- * The age & ability of those involved
- * Whether an individual student or a group is involved
- * The level of staff confidence & competence in implementing a restorative approach
- * The support of the parents/carers
- * Whether the student(s) displaying bullying-type behaviour acknowledge(s) the unacceptable behaviour, & can be encouraged to feel empathy for the student experiencing this behaviour, & act appropriately
- * The willingness to engage in a group intervention
- * Whether or not the student experiencing this behaviour has acted provocatively

Level 1 Intervention - Low Level Bullying Behaviour

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 student(s) experiencing bullying-type behaviour. **NEVER ignore low level bullying behaviour.**

Staff should:

- * Explain the inappropriateness of the behaviour, in line with Blessed Trinity College core values & positive behaviour for learning policy
- * Identify possible consequences if the behaviour continues > **ACTIONS & CONSEQUENCES**
- * Point out the level of distress experienced by the other student(s)
- * Talk with the student experiencing this behaviour, to explore whether he/she has in any way provoked the bullying-type behaviour, & help him/her to identify ways in which he/she may be supported e.g. peer support
- * Encourage reparation to be made, if appropriate
- * Monitor the situation

Level 2 Interventions - Intermediate Level Bullying Behaviour

While interventions at Level 2 involve continuing with the above, there may be a shift from individual support to group interventions. To be effective, small group work needs:

- * The consent & involvement of the student experiencing this behaviour
- * To be planned dependent on age, stage & ability
- * Carefully selected group membership
- * To take place in a suitable environment
- * To be facilitated in a positive manner
- * Structured & focused activities, using active learning approaches to stimulate discussion amongst members & develop group identity
- * Decision & outcomes to be agreed
- * To facilitate the development of empathy among students
- * A solution focused approach to the situation
- * To provide opportunities for students to take responsibility
- * To assess ongoing effectiveness of agreed actions

Level 3 Interventions - Complex Bullying Behaviour

Interventions at Level 3 will often involve the AVP, SENCO, &/ other senior leaders, to determine the way forward & a plan of intervention. This planning may occur through a multi-agency discussion, involving EA Services &/ other external support agencies.

Bullying at this level may involve complex group dynamics, where a number of roles are evident, such as those displaying bullying-type behaviour, bystanders and students experiencing this behaviour. Consequently, interventions may require one-to-one meetings, small group work &/ whole class involvement. These will often require group interventions as discussed in Level 2, along with individual support &/ resilience/strength building programmes.

Level 4 Interventions - High Risk Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviours assessed as Level 4 are severe and may present a threat to the safety and welfare of the students involved. Such severe concerns may be new, or may have proved resistant to earlier interventions, & have now been assessed as high risk. Incidents at this level must be assessed in relation to the risk posed to any/all the students involved. Advice &/ support may be accessed through the EA Behaviour Support Team &/ Child Protection Support Service for Schools.

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.

- Member of staff will record the incident – ***Incident of Concern Report*** – see next page
- Pass on the report to Head of Year to clarify the level of intervention required
- If deemed Level 1, the Form Teacher, in consultation with the HoY, will use the guidelines contained in the Positive Behaviour Policy to remind students of expected behaviour. He/she will continue to monitor the situation, and ‘check in’ with the student frequently during AM registration etc. ***A Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF) will be completed and stored electronically.***
- If Level 2, the Head of Year will plan an intervention strategy with a solution focused approach to the situation, and will monitor the effectiveness of this strategy
- If Level 3, the AVP & SENCO will work in collaboration with the students, to determine the way forward, keeping parents/carers informed, as appropriate
- If Level 4, this indicates a serious threat to the safety and welfare of one or more students who may be at risk. The SLT may seek the advice and support of other agencies such as Behaviour Support Team, SPSS, Education Authority’s Child Protection Support Services, Educational Psychology &/ EWO.

Additional support materials are available using the links below:

<https://www.ncb.org.uk/northern-ireland/evidence-and-impact/northern-ireland-anti-bullying-forum>

[http://www.endbullying.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour.pdf](http://www.endbullying.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Effective_Responses_to_Bullying_Behaviour.pdf)

Incident of Concern Report



Brief outline of incident:

Student(s) involved (name & class):

What? Where? When? (time, day, date):

Action taken:

Member of Staff Name: _____

Date: _____

*Please return the completed **Incident of Concern Report** immediately to the relevant Care Team*