

# Fort Hill Integrated College



## Anti-Bullying Policy

Reviewed: Aug 2023

Next Review: Aug 2024

# **Fort Hill Integrated College**

## **Anti-Bullying Policy (ABP)**

### **Framework**

#### **Section 1 – Introduction and Statement**

At Fort Hill Integrated College, we believe all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable. We believe that all students have the right to learn in a safe and supportive environment. The role of this policy is to ensure that all have an understanding of the need to have a school environment which allows all to reach their fullest potential, without barriers to their success. Its function is to ensure that the positive well-being of all is promoted.

It will be the responsibility of the school, through the Board of Governors, to ensure that all students have a fair and equitable educational experience that is not affected by students who are displaying bullying behaviour. It is also the purpose of the policy to highlight ways in which the school seeks to educate all regards the preventative measures which they can deploy to help deal with bullying situations. These include a range of school-based activities which provide key strategies and approaches that can be used in school and outside of school. These will allow students to deal with the issue of bullying in an appropriate manner.

The Education and Libraries Order (NI) 2003, requires the Board of Governors to: 'Safeguard and promote the welfare of registered students' (A.17)

The school supports the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which sets out every child's right to:

- Be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, maltreatment or exploitation. (A.19)
- Be protected from discrimination. (A.2)
- Express their views, in a supported and accessible way, on issues that affect them, and to have their opinions taken seriously. (A.12)
- Education. (A.28)

#### **Section 2 – Context**

Our purpose is to provide a safe and secure learning environment for all our students in Fort Hill Integrated College; an environment which is conducive to effective learning and teaching, free from intimidation, the threat of psychological and physical abuse. The school's anti-bullying policy is an integral part of our

- Pastoral Care Policy,
- Safeguarding Procedures and
- Positive Behaviour Policy.

The Policy is also informed and guided by current legislation,

### **The Legislative Context:**

- ✦ [The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016](#)
- ✦ [The Education and Libraries Order \(Northern Ireland\) 2003 \(A17-19\)](#)
- ✦ [The Education \(School Development Plans\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2010](#)
- ✦ [The Children \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1995](#)
- ✦ [The Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- ✦ [The Health and Safety at Work Order \(Northern Ireland\) 1978](#)

### **The Policy & Guidance Context**

- ✦ The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors (DE, 2019)
- ✦ [Pastoral Care in School: Promoting Positive Behaviour \(DE, 2001\)](#)
- ✦ [Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools \(DE, 2017\)](#)
  - [Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland \(Dept. of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2016\)](#)
  - [Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland Policies and Procedures \(SBNI, 2017\)](#)

### **The International Context**

- ✦ [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#)

## **Section 3 – Ethos & Principles**

Fort Hill Integrated is an integrated all-ability school. We are committed to ensuring that all our students are provided with the opportunity to achieve to their full educational potential in a challenging and stimulating environment in which they all feel safe and valued.

*Our vision is to;*

- Enable every student to realise their potential in all aspects of their life.
- Remove any barriers that may prevent a student fulfilling their potential.
- Recognise, celebrate, value and learn from the diversity brought by each member of our college community
- Provide opportunities for students to share their diverse backgrounds, beliefs, identities and experiences.
- Empower each student to recognise the value in their own diversity and that of others.
- Nurture and grow the effective links between the College and the wider community
- Inspire our students to be productive members of society with the skills and desire to positively change it.
  
- Develop a culture where bullying is unacceptable and where every child and young person is safe and feels safe from bullying.
- Embody a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole College.
- Empower each student to recognise the unacceptable nature of bullying, responding to it in an appropriately decisive manner.
- Empower everyone in our school community to take a stand against bullying and create a safe and welcoming environment for all.

## **Section 4 – Consultation and Participation**

In compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, the school has consulted a range of stakeholders:

Students:

- *Consultative workshops with Student Council*
- Consultative workshops with our group of Anti-Bullying Buddies.
- Class-based activities
- Whole school online Google docs questionnaires distributed to all students

Parents:

- Pastoral questionnaires to incorporate element of Anti-Bullying procedures.
- Information shared with parents/carers.
- PTA input and consultation
- Policy published, all stakeholders encouraged to feedback on content and efficacy.

Staff

- ✦ Staff surveys should incorporate element of anti-bullying procedures.
- ✦ Engagement activity for all staff, teaching and Non-Teaching
- ✦ Representative members of staff involved in writing anti-bullying policy (Pastoral Leaders; Year Co-ordinators; Anti-Bullying Ambassador Co-ordinator; Designated Child Protection Officer; SLT)

## **Section 5 – What is Bullying?**

Addressing Bullying in Schools Definition of “bullying”:

1. A 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.

B For the purposes of subsection A, “act” includes omission.

***Bullying is behaviour that is usually repeated, which is carried out intentionally to cause hurt, harm or to adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others.***

Our Policy shows that whilst bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there may be 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, Fort Hill 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

Any incidents which are not considered bullying behaviour will be addressed under our Positive Behaviour Policy.

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 student mean and hurtful names
- ❖ telling lies or spread false rumours about others
- ❖ trying to make other students 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** (due consideration is given to location, nature, severity and timing of incidents)

- ❖ 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 (eg. photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone

Other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.

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

Age	Marital status
Appearance	Race
Breakdown in peer relationships	Religion
Community background	Disability / SEN
Political affiliation	Ability
Gender identity	Looked After Child status
Sexual orientation	Young Carer status
Pregnancy	

Bullying is an emotive issue, therefore it is essential that we use supportive, understanding language when discussing these matters. For that reason, we will not refer to a child as ‘a bully’, nor will we refer to a child as ‘a victim’. Instead, we will refer to the child as describing the situation surrounding that child, for example:

- A child displaying bullying behaviours
- A child experiencing bullying behaviour

We encourage all members of our school community to use this language when discussion bullying incidents.

In determining ‘**harm**’ we define:

- Emotional or psychological harm as intentionally causing distress or anxiety by scaring, humiliating or affecting adversely a student’s self-esteem.
- Physical harm as intentionally hurting a student by causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.

Special consideration will be given to any occurrences where the student displaying the behaviour has a recognised special need/s and or disability/s. The nature and context of these will be acknowledged in the assessment of, decisions about, interventions enacted and any sanctions imposed in relation to the behaviour.

## **Section 6 – Preventative Measures**

The following measures are taken by Fort Hill Integrated College to prevent bullying behaviour, as defined in the section above. The college’s measures aim to promote and strengthen an anti-bullying ethos within the school and the wider community. The focus for all anti-bullying work is one of proactive prevention.

Fort Hill Integrated College sets out a number of key actions and practices adopted within the college, with the aim of preventing bullying and creating a safe learning environment.

- Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the **Positive Behaviour Policy**, through Assemblies, Yearbook, Induction Programme, Restorative conversations, meetings and parent information evenings
- Promotion of anti-bullying messages through the curriculum eg. inclusion of age-appropriate material specific to individual subject areas related to bullying such as Citizenship; Employability; Careers Education; Personal Development; English and RE; positive behaviour and inclusion
- Addressing issues such as the various forms of bullying, including the how and why it can happen, through the school’s Personal Development Programme (eg. sectarian, racist, homophobic, transphobic, disablist, etc.). Through Induction Programmes, student planner, Integrated Education Month activities, NIABF - Anti-Bullying week activities.
- Involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects, supporting students to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity.
- Through the preventative curriculum which actively promotes positive emotional health and wellbeing (eg. mindfulness training, coping strategies, mental health awareness, resilience training – focus on I can, I am, I have and Take 5 (5 steps to mental health), Integration unit, PD programme, Induction Process, Growth Mindset, PIPS Support, PCSP workshops on E safety, drugs and alcohol, healthy relationships. Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week Activities\_Assemblies – whole school focus, Personal Development activities, Blue Day.
- Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, eg Safer Internet Day, & NIABF Anti-Bullying Week

- Development of peer-led systems to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the college – Student Voice and Buddies, Yr 8 mentors and sixth form prefects / student voice.
- Development of effective strategies for site management / supervision, eg. training for supervisors, social interaction groups, sixth form mentors, buddy system and provision of a variety of play options to meet the needs of all students. Staff on duties, lunch time activities (clubs). Split breaks and lunches.
- Focused assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying.
- Development of effective strategies for the management of unstructured times (eg. break time, lunch) Learning Support, games club, lunchtime activities.
- Provision and promotion of extra- and co-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. For example sporting activity, creative arts, leisure and games, etc.
- SEN pupils integrated into mainstream lessons.
- Proactive and overt promotion of integrated ethos.
- Reward and achievement activities designed to promote community spirit.

Fort Hill Integrated College has put in place **Preventative measures** to prevent bullying behaviour on the way to and from school:

- Development of a culture where students take pride in being a student of Fort Hill Integrated College and are viewed as ambassadors for their school within the community. This includes regular reminders of the positive behaviour expectations of students whilst travelling to and from school, delivered through PD programme, assemblies and interactions with all staff.
- Measures to empower students to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school.
- Regular engagement with transport providers (eg. Translink, EA Transport, etc.) to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns.
- Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home through staff on bus duty and staff on reception duty in morning time.

Fort Hill Integrated College employs strategies to **raise awareness** of the nature and impact of online bullying and provide guidance and support for students to make use of the internet in a safe, responsible and respectful way. This may include:

- Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through Personal Development programme- e.g. Managing Influences and Making Decisions, Safety and Managing Risk, ICT programme - including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use.
- Participation in Anti-Bullying Week activities.
- Engagement with key statutory and voluntary sector agencies C2k, PSNI, CPSS, Public Health Agency, Safeguarding Board NI, NI e-Safety Forum to support the promotion of key messages.
- Participation in annual Safer Internet Day and promotion of key messages throughout the year.

- Development and implementation of robust and appropriate E-safety policies in related areas Acceptable Use Policy; C2k Filtering and Blocking Policy, Mobile Phone Policy, Bring Your Own Device Policy & remote learning policy.

## **Section 7 – Responsibility**

Everyone in the school community, including students, their parents/carers and the staff of Fort Hill Integrated College are expected to respect the rights of others to be safe.

Everyone has the responsibility to work together to:

- ✓ foster positive self-esteem
- ✓ behave towards others in a mutually respectful way
- ✓ model high standards of personal behaviour
- ✓ be alert to signs of bullying behaviour
- ✓ inform the school of any concerns relating to bullying behaviour
- ✓ refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying behaviour, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- ✓ refrain from retaliating to any form of bullying behaviour
- ✓ intervene to support any person who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- ✓ report any concerns or instances of bullying behaviour witnessed or suspected, to a member of staff.
- ✓ emphasise the importance of seeking help from a trusted adult about bullying behaviour when it happens or is observed
- ✓ explain the implications of allowing the bullying behaviour to continue unchecked, for themselves and/or others.
- ✓ listen sensitively to anyone who has been bullied, take what is said seriously, and provide reassurance that appropriate action will be taken
- ✓ know how to seek support – internal and external
- ✓ resolve difficulties in restorative ways to prevent recurring bullying behaviour and meet the needs of all parties

## **Section 8 – Reporting a Bullying Concern**

### *Students Reporting a Concern*

Fort Hill Integrated College encourages students and parents to speak to staff if they have a concern about a potential bullying situation. The school has identified Child Protection Officers which form the Safeguarding team but all staff can be approached to discuss a potential bullying incident. ANY student can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the student who is experiencing this behaviour. Our message to students focuses on 'getting help' rather than 'telling'. As such, all students are encouraged to 'get help' if they have a concern about bullying behaviour that they experience or is experienced by another.

Students can report bullying concerns in a number of ways:

- Verbally- talking to a member of staff
- By writing a note to a member of staff (eg. in a homework diary)
- By sending an email to school support email or via a form class Google classroom.
- By speaking to a mentor / Bully buddy.

### ***Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern***

Fort Hill Integrated College encourages parents and carers to raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. Parents/carers are reminded to encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'.

The process of parents/carers reporting bullying concerns is as follows:

- In the first instance, all bullying concerns should be reported to the Pastoral Leader. **(The principal is keep fully informed of all bullying concerns at the earliest point of contact)**
- Where the parent is not confident that the interventions have had the desired impact to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, they should re-contact the pastoral leader who will refer the behaviour to the Head of junior/senior school, further interventions will be put in place.
- Where the parent is not confident in the outcomes of the interventions by the pastoral leader / Head of School, to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern will be referred to Vice Principal.
- Where the parent is not satisfied that with the impact of the interventions by the Vice Principal, to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern will be referred to Principal.
- Where the parent/carer is unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. This involves making a formal, written complaint, to the Chair of the Board of Governors in line with our Schools Complaints Procedure (available on our college website)

At all stages a timeline for interventions and reviews will be agreed by all parties. It is important that the interventions are given time to work and to realise, that sometimes it may take several attempts to resolve an issue. Unresolved bullying behaviour will be escalated through the referral system as a matter of course.

All reports of bullying concerns received from students and/or parents/carers will be responded to in line with our Anti-Bullying policy and feedback will be made to the person who made the report. **However, it must be noted that no information about action taken in relation to a student can be disclosed to anyone other than the student and their parents/carers.**

## **Section 9 – Responding to a Bullying Concern**

The processes outlined below provide a framework for how Fort Hill Integrated College will respond to any bullying concerns identified.

Using the NIABF Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource, the member/s of staff responsible shall...

- Clarify facts and perceptions
- Check records
- Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour
- Decide if the behaviour meets the criteria to be classified as Bullying Behaviour
- Identify any themes or motivating factors
- Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed
- Identify intervention level
- Select and implement appropriate interventions for all students involved.
- Agree sanctions as and if deemed necessary.
- Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions
- Review outcome of interventions
- Select and implement further interventions as necessary
- Keep all parties informed of progress / outcomes.

Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour focuses on responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved

When responding to a bullying concern, school staff shall implement interventions aimed at responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. Fort Hill Integrated has well established restorative practices which are used as part of the response to bullying behaviour.

### **Restorative questions used:**

**What has happened?**

**What do you think about what happened and how do you feel about it?**

**Who do you think has been affected and how?**

**What do you think needs to happen to put things right?**

**What do you think needs to happen in the future to make sure the situation does not occur again?**

Where appropriate, the College may implement sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour. **However, information regarding any action taken regarding a student cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that student and their parents/carers.**

## **Section 10 – Recording**

The school will centrally record all relevant information related to reports of bullying concerns using BCAAF Documentation which will include:

- how the bullying behaviour was displayed (the method)
- the motivation for the behaviour
- how each incident was addressed by the school
- the outcome of the interventions employed.

Access to these records will be restricted and only provided to those members of school staff with a legitimate need to have access.

All records will be maintained in line with relevant data protection legislation and guidance and will be disposed of in line with the school's Retention and Disposal of Documents Policy. Collated information regarding incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour will be used to inform the future development of anti-bullying policy and practice within the school.

## **Section 11 – Professional Development of Staff**

Fort Hill Integrated College recognises the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff; these include:

- stating a commitment to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD provisions
- noting the impact of the training given on both the policy and its procedures - e.g. any amendments made, inclusions added etc.
- ensuring that opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to Governors and all staff – teaching and non-teaching
- stating that CPD records will be kept and updated regularly

## **Section 12 – Monitoring and Review of Policy**

To appropriately monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors shall:

- maintain a standing item on the agenda of each meeting of the Board, under Safeguarding 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.

This Anti-Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with students and their parents/carers, before end of August 2024.

## **Section 12 – Links to Other Policies**

In the development and implementation of this Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors has been mindful of related policies, including:

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education policy
- E-Safety Policy & Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
- Mobile Phone and hand held device Policy
- Educational Visits policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Attendance and punctuality policy
- Student code of conduct
- Counselling policy
- Data protection policy
- Parental complaints procedure

## **Feedback**

This policy will be freely available to all stakeholders via the College website. Anyone wishing to comment / feedback on its content or efficacy can do so via the school e-mail info account. All opinions and suggestions are valued and considered as part of the regular policy review process.

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