

# Regent House School



## Anti-Bullying Policy

Draft May 2019

## Introduction

At Regent House School we believe all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable. We believe that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supported environment.

## Context

This Anti-Bullying Policy has been developed in conjunction with the following legislative and policy/guidance framework:

### 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)

The key points to note are: ***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 and while travelling to and from school.
- When under control of school staff, but away from school (eg. school trip).
- When receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere (eg. 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;*(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)

### **Ethos & Principles**

We are committed to a society where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying. We understand that everyone in our school community has a role to play in taking a stand against bullying and creating a safe and welcoming environment for all.

### **Consultation and Participation**

This policy has been developed in consultation with registered pupils and their parents/carers, in compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.

Consultation with stakeholders took place, for example:

- Consultative workshops with Anti-Bullying Ambassadors and Student Council Representatives;
- Whole school online questionnaires distributed to all staff, pupils and parents
- Engagement with parent groups, eg. PTA

### **What is Bullying?**

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides schools with a legal definition which states:

1.—(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 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.

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

Therefore, in summary, according to the Regent House Anti-Bullying Policy;

***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.***

While bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that, in line with the legislation, Regent House will consider as bullying.

When assessing a one-off incident, to make a decision on whether to classify it as bullying, Regent House 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 the 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 pupil mean and hurtful names
- telling lies or spread false rumours about others
- try to make other pupils dislike another pupil/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. Sharing of inappropriate images may be dealt with in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

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

In Regent House we define harm in accordance with DE guidance. Therefore, 'harm' is defined as:

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

In developing this Policy, Regent House have noted the motivations behind bullying as suggested in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016;

- 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

Bullying is an emotive issue, therefore it is essential that we ensure 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 describing the situation surrounding that child, for example:

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

We encourage all members of the school community to use this language when discussing bullying incidents.

## ***Preventative Measures***

This Policy aims to promote a strong anti-bullying ethos within the school and the wider school community.

Under the legislation, the focus for all anti-bullying work should be on prevention and therefore the following key actions are in place 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;
- promotion of anti-bullying messages through the curriculum eg. inclusion of age-appropriate material specific to individual subject areas related to bullying, positive behaviour and inclusion;
- addressing issues such as the various forms of bullying, including the how and why it can happen, through assemblies, external organisations and LLW (eg. sectarian, racist, homophobic, transphobic, disablist, etc.).
- involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity;
- through the preventative curriculum actively promote positive emotional health and wellbeing;
- participation in the NIABF annual anti-bullying week activities;
- engagement in key national and regional campaigns, e.g Safer Internet Day, Good Relations Week, etc;
- development of peer-led systems (e.g. school council and anti-bullying ambassadors) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school;
- development of effective strategies for playground management, e.g. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds and identified boundaries;
- focused assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying;
- 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.

Preventative measures that are put in place in Regent House to prevent bullying behaviour on the way to and from school include:

- the development of a culture where pupils take pride in their school and are viewed as ambassadors for their school within the community. This includes regular reminders of the positive behaviour expectations of pupils whilst travelling to and from school;
- peer monitoring systems on buses;
- regular engagement with transport providers (eg. Translink, EA Transport, etc.) to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns;
- promotion of key anti-bullying messages and awareness of behaviour expectations of pupils amongst the local community (eg. local shops, cafes, service providers, residents, etc), including information on how to raise any concerns with the school;

- appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home (eg. staff duty at school gate/bus stops, where appropriate)

We have taken measures to raise awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying and support pupils to make use of the internet in a safe, responsible and respectful way. This includes:

- addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through LLW/assemblies, including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use.
- participation in Anti-Bullying Week/assembly.
- engagement with key statutory and voluntary sector agencies (eg. C2k, PSNI, Public Health Agency) to support the promotion of key messages.
- development and implementation of robust and appropriate policies in related areas (eg. Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy)

## **Responsibility**

Everyone in Regent House has responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of the school community.

Everyone in the school community, including pupils, their parents/carers the staff of the school and Board of Governors 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 pro-social behaviour;
- be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications 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.

## **Reporting a Bullying Concern**

### *Pupils Reporting a Concern*

Pupils are encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff.

Pupils can raise bullying concerns in one or more of the following ways:

- verbally- talking to a member of staff;
- by writing a note to a member of staff;
- by sending an email to a member of staff;
- by posting a comment in a 'worry box.'

ANY pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. All pupils are encouraged to 'get help' if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another.

### *Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern*

Parents and carers should raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. They should encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'.

The process of reporting bullying concerns is as follows:

- in the first instance, all bullying concerns should be reported to the Class Teacher/Form Teacher;
- where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to Head of Year;
- where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to the Head of School, as applicable;
- where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Senior Teacher/Vice-Principal to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to Principal.

Where the parent/carer remains 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 (See Complaints Policy for full details).

All reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or parents/carers will be responded to in line with this policy and feedback will be given to the person who made the report. No information about action taken in relation to a pupil can be disclosed to anyone other than the pupil and his/her parents/carers.



## **Responding to a Bullying Concern**

The processes outlined below provide a framework for how Regent House will respond to any bullying concerns identified.

The member of staff of staff responding to the concern will:

- clarify facts and perceptions;
- check records (SIMS/behaviour management module);
- assess the incident against the criteria for 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 pupils involved, including appropriate interventions, consequences and sanctions not listed in the effective responses to bullying behaviour resource;
- track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions;
- review outcome of interventions;
- select and implement further intentions as necessary.

Our main focus is on a restorative approach to bullying behaviour. Our interventions aim to resolve the concern and restore the well-being of those involved.

However, a more punitive approach, including consequences and sanctions, may be employed at the school's discretion. Any action taken regarding a pupil cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and his/her parents/carers.

## **Recording**

As outlined in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, a record of all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour will be maintained. This 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.

Records may be kept on the online SIMS Module, which is part of the C2k system in schools. 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.

## **Professional Development of Staff**

This may include:

- stating a commitment to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD 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.

## **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 where a report on 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 pupils and their parents/carers, every four years.

## **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
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- E-Safety Policy & Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Educational Visits
- Staff Code of Conduct

