

Wallace High School

Anti-bullying policy

Aims

- To outline the school community's understanding of what constitutes bullying and the sanctions to be applied if bullying occurs.
- To create an atmosphere in which all pupils have a right to learn free from intimidation or fear and have a clear understanding that bullying thrives on being ignored¹.
- To uphold the school's core value of respect for others irrespective of their physical appearance, personality, race, religious belief, sexual orientation or disability.
- To ensure that parents and pupils know how to raise a concern about bullying and have confidence that it will be dealt with appropriately.
- To keep staff fully informed on the policy & procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying reported to them.
- To ensure that the needs of pupils who are bullied are paramount and to provide both immediate and continued support to them.
- To enable those pupils involved in bullying to recognise the damage caused and to adopt positive attitudes and behaviour.

¹ "Bullying thrives on secrecy, the reluctance of the target to talk about it and the reluctance of responsible adults to acknowledge its existence."

Pastoral Care in Schools – Promoting Positive Behaviour (June 2001)

Rationale

This policy should be viewed within the context of the Pastoral Care Policy* which outlines our commitment to value our pupils and to support them as they strive to reach their academic potential.

Wallace High School is completely opposed to any and all forms of bullying behaviour and operates a zero tolerance towards it. Respect for others is one of the core values which we expect all of the members of our school community to uphold and we view bullying as being contrary to this central belief. All members of our school community have a right to be free from being bullied and a responsibility to assist in whatever way they can to ensure that others are similarly protected. If bullying does occur, we are committed to dealing with it promptly and effectively.

Definition

"Bullying can be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a long period of time, where it is difficult for the victim to defend him- or herself."

Child Protection: Pastoral Care in Schools (DENI 1999)

"Children have the right to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse."

Article 19 UN Convention on the rights of the child (1991)

Incidents associated with bullying behaviour

Physical

- unwanted physical contact e.g. hitting, kicking, pushing, tripping, poking.
- indirect contact e.g. spitting, throwing objects at someone, unacceptable gestures, taking or causing damage to personal belongings, defacing personal property.
- taking images of another pupil without their permission and/or sharing these with others.

Verbal (& written):

- taunting; teasing; name-calling; mocking another due to physical characteristics, race, personal beliefs, sexual orientation, achievements or (perceived) personality traits, using abusive language.
- issuing threats.
- spreading rumours.
- any of the above written in: note form, as graffiti, by text, by email, through use of chat rooms, via social networking sites or by other web-based facilities.

Emotional:

- excluding someone from a social group.
- blackmail, forcing someone to do something against his/her will.

The Responsibilities of staff

Our staff will:

- foster in our pupils self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others.
- demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect from our pupils.
- address bullying through the Personal, Social & Health Education programmes and other parts of the curriculum.
- be alert to signs of distress and other indications of bullying both inside and outside the classroom.
- listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them.
- report suspected cases of bullying to the Head of Year or Vice Principal (Pastoral).
- follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying and report back fully on the action that has been taken.
- deal with observed cases of bullying promptly and effectively in accordance with agreed procedures.

The Responsibilities of Pupils:

We expect our pupils:

- to understand that all pupils at Wallace have a right to be protected and to behave in a caring manner towards other members of the school community.
- to refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying.
- to report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying.

- to refrain from ‘doing nothing’ recognising that to do so may mean that victims continue to suffer.
- to help foster inclusive friendships so that other pupils do not feel isolated or excluded.

The Responsibilities of Parents

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:

- watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying.
- advising their children to report any bullying to any member of staff, who will then inform the relevant Head of Year.
- advising their children not to retaliate violently to any form of bullying.
- being sympathetic and supportive towards their children and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken.
- informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved.
- co-operating with the school if their child is accused of bullying, try to ascertain the truth, and point out the implications of bullying both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.
- carefully monitoring their children’s use of the internet and mobile phone.

Procedures for dealing with reported incidents

- Any reports of bullying, in the first instance, will be reported to the Head of Year, or, in their absence, the Assistant Head of Year. The VP (Pastoral) will also be informed and an appropriate strategy will be agreed.
- The report of bullying will be investigated promptly. Written statements may be taken.
- A record will be kept of all significant aspects of the incident and the incident will be logged in the school’s bullying register.
- Parents/guardians of both the pupil bullied and the pupil bullying will be contacted.
- The pupil bullied will be given immediate practical help and support to ensure they are able to experience all aspects of normal school life without fear of further bullying or recrimination.
- Continued support will be given, where necessary, and a member of the Form Staff will follow up at a later date to ensure the matter has not re-occurred.
- It will be made very clear to the pupil bullying that their behaviour is totally unacceptable. Advice will be given to help the pupil to change their behaviour and they will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the behaviour has stopped. If appropriate assistance from outside agencies may be sought.
- Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken in line with the school’s Disciplinary Policy*. The range of sanctions includes withdrawal of privileges, Friday detention, Saturday detention, suspension or expulsion for severe or persistent misdemeanours.

Links with other school policies

The school also has a Child Protection Policy*. It is important to distinguish between bullying and child abuse carried out by another child. If the latter is suspected then the school's child protection procedures will be followed for both the victim and the alleged abuser.

* Copies of the school's Pastoral Care, Child Protection and Discipline policies can be found on the school website www.wallacehigh.net, the school prospectus, or can be obtained on request from the school office.

Useful Contacts

Childline (08001111) – www.childline.org.uk. provides confidential advice to young people via telephone and on-line. A service of the NSPCC.

BullyingUK - www.bullying.co.uk. Offers advice to pupils, parents & schools on how to deal with bullying. Has many links to other useful UK-based websites.

Kidscape – www.kidscape.org.uk. Offers advice to pupils, parents & schools on how to deal with bullying. Has its own page on cyber bullying.

Parents Advice Centre (028 9023 8800) – www.pachelp.org. Provides help and support to parents facing any family difficulty including bullying.

Stop Text Bully – www.stoptextbully.com. Designed to offer advice to pupils, parents & schools on dealing with text bullying.

Chat Danger – www.chatdanger.com. A website designed to educate young people about the potential dangers of mobile phones, chat rooms, messenger websites & email.

Centre for Exploitation and Online Protection – www.ceop.gov.uk. Part of the UK police which is responsible for protection young people from on-line abuse. Find the latest information on the sites young people like to visit, mobiles and new technology. Find out what's good, what's not and what you can do about it.

NSPCC – www.nspcc.org.uk. Has some general advice on how to deal with bullying.

UrZone – www.urzone.com. A PSNI website which offers advice to young people on issues of importance.

Northern Ireland Anti-bullying Forum Website – www.niabf.org.uk. Hosted by Save the Children & funded by Dept. of Education. Offers advice to pupils, parents & schools on how to deal with bullying.

Policy review

It is the responsibility of the Vice Principal (Pastoral) to conduct a formal review of this policy annually. This will be done in consultation with the Principal and the Heads of Year. To assist with this review the Vice Principal (Pastoral) will seek the views of a number of pupils (via the School Council), parents & staff. Any revisions will be discussed with the Leadership Team before being presented to the Board of Governors for approval.

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The views of pupils, parents & staff are welcome at any time & should be directed to the Vice Principal (Pastoral).