

## Anti-Bullying Policy

### **Statement of Intent**

At Ballakermeen High School we have a Code of Conduct in which students are encouraged to show respect and care towards themselves and others. We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *TELLING* school. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell an adult or a Buddy.

### **What Is Bullying?**

We define bullying as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where those who are bullied are powerless to defend themselves. Bullying can take many forms, but the three main types cause stress and have an emotional impact.

1. Physical (examples include, hitting, kicking, theft),
2. Verbal (racist, homophobic remarks and name calling), and
3. Indirect (spreading rumours)."

### **Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Students who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. The school has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

### **Objectives of this Policy**

All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.

All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.

All students and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

As a school we take bullying seriously. Students and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported. Bullying will not be tolerated.

### **Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Students who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

The school has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying. All reported incidents must be thoroughly and promptly investigated. If further action is required it may include arranging for restorative justice sessions and/or the full range of sanctions available to the school. Where appropriate the police may be involved. The effectiveness of any action taken should be checked after an appropriate period.

### **Bullying - Signs and Symptoms**

Although parents are often the first to see warning signs, prevention of bullying is the responsibility of all members of the school community. A child may indicate by signs or

behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school;
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus;
- begs to be driven to school;
- changes their usual routine;
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic);
- begins truanting;
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence;
- starts stammering;
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away;
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares;
- feels ill in the morning;
- begins to do poorly in school work;
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged;
- has possessions go "missing";
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully);
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost";
- has unexplained cuts or bruises;
- comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen);
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable;
- is bullying other children or siblings;
- stops eating;
- is frightened to say what's wrong;
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.