

LARNE GRAMMAR SCHOOL  
**ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

**Section 1 – Introduction**

The School aims to establish an inclusive community in which all pupils and staff are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of individual differences including, but not limited to, culture, race, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation, gender orientation, appearance, ability or disability.

Larne Grammar School is a closely knit community in which all its members are entitled to equal rights, opportunity, respect and worth.

The aim of our anti-bullying policy is to clarify for pupils, staff and parents that bullying is **totally unacceptable**. In Larne Grammar, we wish to encourage an environment where independence is celebrated and individuals can flourish without fear. We believe that every student has the right to be safe and happy in school and to be protected from bullying. In order to fulfil these objectives, this school adopts a strong and active anti-bullying stance. In addition, the School aims to foster an environment of openness in which pupils, parents/carers and staff feel comfortable to report any bullying behaviours which they feel are taking place.

**Section 2 – Context**

This policy has been developed and formulated in the context of the following legislative framework and in line with the relevant current policy/guidance outlined below.

**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
  - While travelling to and from school
  - When under control of school staff, but away from school (e.g. school trip)
  - When receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere (e.g. 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)

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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)

### **Section 3 – Ethos & Vision**

#### **Ethos**

“Larne Grammar School promotes positive moral values in a climate of high expectations and achievement among all the individuals and groups based on mutual respect. Pupils exhibit self-control, personal responsibility and self-worth, developed in the classroom and through a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils learn, grow and succeed in an atmosphere of praise and encouragement which promotes a sense of belonging and enjoyment for everyone.”

#### **Vision**

“Larne Grammar School will strive to be a community-based centre of excellence whereby high quality teaching and learning will serve to enhance the lives of all, enabling pupils to achieve their potential in a spirit of mutual respect and support.”

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

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

- discussion with School Council;
- items regarding bullying incorporated into SDP pupil questionnaire;
- class-based activities during Registration and as part of the PD programme;
- engagement with Larne Grammar Friends' Association;
- draft policy sent to all parents and comments invited;
- items regarding bullying incorporated into SDP parental questionnaire.

The School has also consulted with other members of the school community when developing the policy and procedures, for example:

- training sessions delivered to teaching staff and the Board of Governors;
- discussion by members of pastoral team;
- items regarding bullying incorporated into SDP staff questionnaire;
- SLT involvement in the writing of the anti-bullying policy;
- involvement of members of staff, parents and local community representatives on the Board of Governors in the formulation of the policy and procedures.

### **Section 5 – What is Bullying?**

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides the following legal definition of “bullying”:

**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:

***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.***

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Under this new definition, the school will assess any bullying concerns raised against five key criteria, namely:

- Is the behaviour intentional? (The school will take into account the capacity of a pupil to understand the impact of their behaviour.)
- Is the behaviour targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils?
- Is the behaviour repeated?
- Is the behaviour causing physical or emotional harm?
- Does the behaviour involve omission? (\*may not always be present)

If each one of the first four of these criteria are met (except omission), then the behaviour will be addressed according to the procedure set out in the Anti-Bullying Policy. Any incidents which are not considered bullying behaviour will be addressed as socially unacceptable behaviour under the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy.

While bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are 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, the school 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;

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 spreading 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 or activity;
  - refusing to include someone in group work.
  - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, spreading rumours, giving looks, sending unpleasant notes.
- 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.

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

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

- Age;
- Appearance;
- Breakdown in peer relationships;
- Community background;

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- 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 by describing the situation surrounding that child, for example:

- A child displaying bullying behaviours; and
- A child experiencing bullying behaviours.

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

The DE Guidance defines emotional and physical harm as follows:

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

This policy will apply whilst a pupil is on the premises of the school during the school day, while travelling to or from school during school term, while the pupil is in the lawful control of a member of staff and/or while the pupil is receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of the school and provided elsewhere.

### **Section 6 – Preventative Measures**

The focus of this section is to set out the measures to be taken by the School to prevent bullying behaviour, as defined in the section above. Under the legislation, the focus for all anti-bullying work should be on prevention.

The School has in place a number of measures to promote inclusion and to prevent bullying behaviours whilst pupils are on the premises of the school during the school day, while travelling to or from school during school term, while the pupil is in the lawful control of a member of staff and/or while the pupil is receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of the school and provided elsewhere.

At the core of this lies the School’s ethos of mutual respect and support, self-control, personal responsibility and self-worth. Pupils learn, grow and succeed in an atmosphere of praise and encouragement which promotes a sense of belonging and enjoyment for everyone.

In addition, the following measures are in place:

- raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy;
- the school’s reward and recognition systems;
- the school’s uniform regulations which help to encourage identification with and support for the school ethos, ensure that pupils from all backgrounds feel welcome, protect pupils from social or peer pressure to dress in a particular way and engender a feeling of community and belonging.
- promotion of anti-bullying messages through the curriculum e.g. 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 Learning for Life and Work (e.g. sectarian, racist, homophobic, transphobic, disablist, etc.);

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- involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects with our three partner schools (Larne High School, Roddensvale Special School and St. Killian's College), supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity;
- the active promotion of 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) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messages within the school;
- development of effective strategies for supervision and management of pupils at break and lunch times;
- 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;
- the provision of appropriate and relevant staff training;
- active collaboration with external partners, including specialist external agencies;
- an expectation that all members of the School community will work collaboratively to prevent incidents of bullying behaviour;
- the development of a culture in which 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;
- the development of measures to empower pupils to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school;
- regular engagement with transport providers (e.g. Translink) to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns.

Larne Grammar School will raise awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying and support their pupils 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 PD and ICT classes, 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 (e.g. C2k, PSNI, Public Health Agency, Safeguarding Board for NI e-Safety Forum) to support the promotion of key messages;
- participation in events such as the annual Safer Internet Day and promotion of key messages throughout the year;
- the development and implementation of robust and appropriate policies in related areas (e.g. ICT Acceptable Use, eSafety and Digital Media Policy and Mobile Devices Policy, Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Pastoral Care Policy).

### **Section 7 – Roles and Responsibilities**

Everyone 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 and the staff of the school 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;

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- 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.

**Board of Governors**

The Board of Governors is responsible for:

- providing leadership to ensure a whole school anti-bullying approach;
- the development, implementation and review of the Anti-Bullying Policy;
- ensuring the implementation of an effective preventative approach to bullying and ensuring consultation with the principal, parents and pupils on preventative measures to be put in place;
- ensuring measures are fully implemented and reviewed every 4 years;
- ensuring records are kept of all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying, underlying motivations and action taken;
- scrutinising and challenging statistical reports and efficacy of interventions (which will be provided to the Board of Governors, through the Safeguarding Committee, at least three times a year);
- engaging with Governor training, as appropriate.

**Senior Leadership Team**

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for:

- ensuring that the school community, including pupils and parents/carers, are involved in the policy review process;
- ensuring that all incidents of alleged bullying behaviour are recorded, including the motivation (if any), method, interventions and outcomes;
- reviewing the effectiveness of interventions used;
- analysing data from SIMS to identify themes, trends and patterns to ensure the implementation of preventative strategies, including through the taught curriculum;
- ensuring that parents/carers are aware of the Complaints Policy and Procedure.

**Section 8 – Reporting a Bullying Concern**

Pupils, parents and anyone else with concerns can make these known to the school in the following ways.

**Pupils Reporting a Concern**

In the first instance, pupils should take the opportunity to discuss any concerns relating to themselves, or about another pupil, with a member of staff that they trust. This may be their Class Tutor, Year Head, subject teacher or any other member of staff within the school (teaching and support). While the members of the Pastoral Team have specific responsibility for dealing with bullying concerns, pupils will be encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and support staff.

Pupils can report bullying concerns in a number of ways, including:

- 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.

Any pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. The emphasis to all pupils is on ‘getting help’ rather than ‘telling’. As such, all pupils are encouraged to ‘get help’ if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another.

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Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern

Parents and carers have a responsibility to raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. Parents/carers also have a responsibility to encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour (by reporting it at the earliest opportunity) and to not do anything to retaliate.

- In the first instance, all bullying concerns should be reported to the Class Tutor.
- 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 Year Head or Senior Teacher i/c Pastoral Care, as applicable.
- Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Year Head/Senior Teacher to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to Vice Principal or Principal, as appropriate.

Where the parent/carer remains dissatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. A copy of the Complaints Policy and Procedure can be accessed from the school website ([www.larnegrammar.org](http://www.larnegrammar.org) – About Us – Policies) or is available, on request, from the General Office.

While the majority of reports of bullying concerns will come from pupils and their parents/carers, the school is open to receiving such reports from anyone.

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 made to the person who made the report. However, it must be noted that no information about action taken in relation to a pupil can be disclosed to anyone other than the pupil and his/her parents/carers.

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

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

Using the Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF) the member of staff responsible shall:

- Clarify facts and perceptions and gather information;
- Check records;
- Assess the incident against the four criteria for bullying behaviour;

If it is assessed as bullying behaviour the member of staff shall then:

- Identify any themes or motivating factors;
- Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed;
- Identify intervention level, as outlined in the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource;
- 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.

When responding to a bullying concern, in the first instance, school staff shall implement interventions aimed at responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. Where appropriate, school staff may implement sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour.

Any action taken regarding a pupil cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and his/her parents/carers.

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**Section 10 – Recording**

Schools have a legal requirement, as set out in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, to maintain a record of all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour.

*The school will centrally record all relevant information related to reports of bullying concerns, including:*

- 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 will be kept on the school's secure Management Information System (SIMS) 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.*

*In addition, paper records relating to all bullying allegations will be retained in a secure filing cabinet, with access restricted 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 Records 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**

The School recognises the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and support 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 support;
- stating that CPD records will be kept and updated regularly.

**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:

- Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy;
- Pastoral Care Policy;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Special Educational Needs Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy;
- ICT Acceptable Use, E-Safety and Digital Media Policy;
- Mobile Devices Policy;
- Educational Visits Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct.

**Section 13 – Monitoring and Review of Policy**

It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors, in liaison with the Principal, to monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying 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 Safeguarding Committee of the Board of Governors where a report on recorded incidents of bullying will be noted;

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- 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.

It is a legal requirement that the Anti-Bullying Policy be reviewed at intervals of no more than four years or following any incident which highlight the need for such a review. It must also be reviewed when directed to by the Department of Education and in light of new guidance. The Board of Governors will, however, review the policy every two years in order to be able to review current practices and issues in a timely and effective manner.



APPENDIX 1 – USEFUL CONTACTS

*Do you need someone to talk to?  
Do you need advice but you aren't sure where to go for help?*

**Designated Teachers for Child Protection**

Mr McAuley	Vice Principal's Office
Mr McKay	A9
Ms Weir	B8

**School Counsellor**

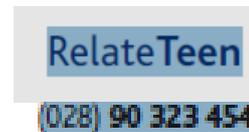
An independent counsellor is available 1 day each week. To request an appointment, post your name and class on a piece of paper in the box outside the Medical Room.

**School Nurse**

Mrs Clarke is available in the Medical Room during school hours and provides medical help and can point you in the right direction if you need advice.



[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)



(Families going through divorce or separation)

**Family Works  
Counselling Service  
028 9182 0341**



**CALL US**  
08457 90 90 90\* (UK)

**EMAIL US**  
[jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

**Child Sexual  
Exploitation (CSE)  
Helpline  
0800 389 1701  
(NSPCC)**

 **Cruse  
Bereavement Care**

**Daytime Helpline: 0844 477 9400  
Email: [helpline@cruse.org.uk](mailto:helpline@cruse.org.uk)**

Don't forget to use your family doctor for help and advice.

*Don't suffer alone. Talk to someone*