

# Erne Integrated College

## Anti Bullying Policy

<b>Date of Publication</b>	April 2023
<b>Policy Review Date</b>	April 2027

## Anti-BULLYING POLICY

This policy outlines procedures to be employed to combat bullying within the school community of Erne Integrated College.

This rewrite of the original policy contains important amendments.

This version of the policy replaces the original Anti-Bullying Policy

- Staff Training 25/8/21
- Takes into consideration all relevant legislation including the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016
- Consultation to take place with students, parents and staff
- Once consultation has taken place - Ratified by Governors

### Proposed timeline

P1 14 <sup>th</sup> February 22	SJM and FB to meet Student Council 2 x PPP 's supplied by Fiona Brown for use with all Form Classes  Year 8 Art Competition
W/B 28 <sup>th</sup> February 22	Students to complete questionnaire's in ICT Class – as kindly agreed by GJC
W/B 07 <sup>th</sup> March 22	Students to complete questionnaire's in ICT Class – as kindly agreed by GJC
WB 07 <sup>th</sup> March 22	SJM and Zoe – to place link for questionnaires on FB/website for other students and Parent/Carers/Staff
WB 14 <sup>th</sup> March 22	Questionnaire Analysis
WB 21 <sup>st</sup> March 22	Questionnaire Analysis
WB 28 <sup>th</sup> March 22	Make policy amendments if/as necessary

## 1 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Bullying behaviour affects everyone. Bullying behaviour is not an inevitable part of school life or a necessary part of growing up, and it rarely sorts itself out. It affects not just the aggressors and the targets. It also affects those other children who watch or witness, and less aggressive students can be drawn in by group pressure. It is clear that certain jokes, insults, intimidating and threatening behaviour, written abuse and violence are to be found in our society.

No one person or group, whether staff or student, should have to accept this type of behaviour. Only when all issues of bullying behaviour are addressed will a child best be able to benefit from the opportunities available at the College.

All references to bullying in this policy are subject to the legal definition of bullying outlined in Section 5.1.

1.2: Erne Integrated College believes that its students have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. At Erne Integrated College we believe all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable. All institutions, both large and small, contain some numbers of students with the potential for bullying behaviour. If a school is well structured and organised, it can minimise the occurrence of bullying incidents. The College also has a clear policy on the promotion of good relationships, behaviour and safeguarding and child protection; the College believes that bullying behaviour is a form of antisocial behaviour, is wrong and will not be tolerated. It is important therefore that the College has a clear written policy to promote this belief, where both students and parents/carers are fully aware that any bullying complaints will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly.

## 2 CONTEXT

This policy was developed in line with guidance set out by Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, DENI and the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF). Its overall purpose is to promote an anti-bullying culture in Erne Integrated College, to help staff provide support to students who have been bullied and to students who engage in bullying behaviour.

Pastoral Care in Schools; Promoting Positive Behaviour (DE, 2001) Paragraph 125 states the following:

*“As well as ensuring that students who are bullying are dealt with in accordance with accepted school policy and procedures, it will be necessary to work with these students to try to help them change their unacceptable behaviour.”*

This policy provides examples of anti-bullying strategies within 4 levels of intervention and provides staff and parents with practical suggestions on how bullying can be addressed.

This policy has been informed and developed using the following legislative and policy/guidance and framework.

### **The Legislative Context: •**

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 students 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 (eg. school trip)
- When receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere (eg. in another school in the Fermanagh Learning Community)

- Requires that the policy be updated at least every four years.

- The Education and Libraries Order (Northern Ireland) 2003 requires the Board of Governors to: - 'Safeguard and promote the welfare of registered students'

- 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) & Circular 2020/07

- 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) sets out every child's right to: - Be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, maltreatment or exploitation. - Be protected from discrimination. Express their views, in a supported and accessible way, on issues that affect them, and to have their opinions taken seriously.

### 3. ETHOS & PRINCIPLES Erne Integrated College is committed to:

- creating and maintaining a calm and supportive school environment where effective learning and teaching can take place;
- supporting all parties in a situation where bullying behaviour has been displayed;
- clarifying for students, staff and parents that bullying is always unacceptable and is regarded by Erne Integrated College as a serious offence that in extreme cases can have legal consequences;
- ensuring that preventative measures are in place;
- emphasising the importance of close co-operation between school and parents and the parents' role in the prevention of bullying;
- fostering a secure anti-bullying environment
- promoting a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole school
- ensuring that all students, parents and staff are aware of this policy and their roles and responsibilities in contributing to its success; and
- demonstrating that no form of bullying will be tolerated in Erne Integrated College and will be dealt with in line with the College Positive Behaviour Policy.

### 4. CONSULTATION & PARTICIPATION

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

The College will consult with all stakeholders by:

- Consultation with the Student Council
- Staff survey for all staff, teaching and non-teaching
- Parent and Student surveys
- Representative members of staff involved in writing anti-bullying policy

## 5. 5.1 WHAT IS BULLYING?

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 defines bullying as follows:

“(1) In this Act, bullying includes (but not is 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.

6 For the purposes of subsection (1), “act” includes omission”. The College will use the below statement to support students’ understanding:

“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.” (NIABF)

Socially unacceptable behaviours become bullying behaviours when the information gathered clearly demonstrates that the unacceptable behaviour does meet the criteria below i.e. on the basis of the evidence gathered the behaviour is/was:

- intentional,
- targeted at a specific student or group of students
- repeated – e.g. 3 or more repetitious incidents involving the same target/s
- causing physical or emotional harm
- omission - intentionally choosing to ignore, isolate or exclude arising from a desire to cause harm

## 5.2 ONE-OFF INCIDENTS

While bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that the College will consider as bullying. When assessing a one-off incident, to make a decision on whether to classify it as bullying, the College 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.

### 5.3 SOCIALLY UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

Understanding bullying and the different forms it can take is the starting point for preventing and responding to socially unacceptable behaviours effectively. The College recognises that there is a continuum of

unacceptable anti-social behaviours that infringe on everyone's right to be safe. The following unacceptable behaviours, when repeated, targeted and intentionally hurtful, may be considered a bullying behaviour. They include : Physical Acts Physical harm is defined as intentionally causing injuries.

It can include: • Hitting, punching, kicking causing bruises, broken bones or burns

- Pushing, shoving, jostling or physical intimidation
- Any other physical contact which may include use of weapons
- Material harm, such as taking/stealing money or possessions or causing damage to possessions

Verbal or Written Acts Unacceptable verbal behaviours include:

- 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
- try to make other students dislike another student/s

Indirect Unacceptable indirect behaviours include: • Omission (Exclusion)

- Leaving someone out of a game
- Refusing to include someone in group work
- Isolation
- Refusal to work with/talk to/play with/help others

Electronic Acts Unacceptable electronic acts include:

- Using online platforms or other electronic communication to carry out any of the written acts noted above
- Impersonating someone online to cause hurt
- Sharing images (eg. photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone
- Misuse of the internet and associated devices to humiliate, threaten and/or isolate another. It should be noted that the above list is not exhaustive and that other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.

Bullying type behaviour can occur due to a variety of motivations. These include, but are not limited to:

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

#### 5.4 USE OF LANGUAGE

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
- A child experiencing bullying behaviours

We encourage all members of the school community to use this language when discussing bullying incidents. The College will use the following definitions of emotional and physical harm which are set out in the DE Guidance.

In determining 'harm' the College defines:

- 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.

#### 6. CREATING AND MAINTAINING AN ANTI-BULLYING ENVIRONMENT

All members of our school community have a shared responsibility to foster a pro-active attitude to bullying. Prevention is as important as the action taken to address reports of bullying. All adults in the school play a vital part as role models as reflected in their dealings with each other and their treatment of the young people. Playgrounds, corridors, toilets and other hidden corners are well supervised during the early morning, break time and lunch time. Lunch time supervisors, caretakers, classroom assistants and all staff who



come in contact with young people are trained to watch for signs of bullying and report them to appropriate staff.

- 6.1 The Preventative Curriculum Respect is a key value that we wish all of our students to foster. In all interactions, students are urged and encouraged to treat others with respect and this underpins our Positive Behaviour Policy. Students are encouraged to take pride in their school and are regularly reminded that they are ambassadors for the College within the local community. To this end, appropriate behaviour to and from school, including on public transport, is encouraged. There is effective communication between the Head of Pastoral Care and Translink to address and monitor any behaviours that do not meet our expectations and to identify early any issues between students. The Personal Development Programme for each year group includes work to help students improve their self-esteem, resilience and social skills and to encourage them to have the self-confidence to reject bullying behaviour from other people. The issue of bullying and what to do about it is continually emphasised in our school community. The College works effectively with outside agencies to support the appropriate care and welfare of all students. Students are able to access counselling via the Familyworks Counselling service and are informed about support services within the community and useful websites such as Childline and the Samaritans. Anti-bullying posters are on display around the College. The College marks Anti-Bullying Week every November with The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act gives schools the authority to take steps to prevent bullying through the use of electronic communication amongst students at any time during term, where that behaviour is likely to have a detrimental effect on the student's education at school. To this regard, the College uses Form Time, LLW and ICT lessons and assemblies to raise awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying. The College encourages students to make use of the internet in a safe, responsible and respectful way. The College runs a variety of extra-curricular activities to support the development of peer relationships and networks, across year groups. The College actively promotes an open, inclusive and mutually respectful working environment and ensures high levels of student participation through promotion of an active Student Council.

## 7. RESPONSIBILITY

Everyone in the school community, including students, their parents/carers and the staff of the school are expected to respect the rights of others to be safe. All stakeholders of Erne Integrated College have a responsibility to ensure the protection and welfare of children are paramount. This also

extends to any volunteers accepted to work in the school during school hours when students are on the premises.

#### 7.1 Responsibility of the Board of Governors Members of the Board of Governors are required to:

- secure measures to prevent bullying
  - to keep a record of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying involving a registered student at the school
  - safeguard and promote the welfare of all registered students whether they are on the school premises or elsewhere while in the lawful control or in the charge of a member of staff of the school
  - consult with registered students on the general principles which will be reflected in the school's Positive Behaviour policy
  - ensure that policies and procedures designed to promote good behaviour and discipline are pursued at school
- ensure that student welfare embraces all aspects of pastoral care, child protection, student behaviour, health and well-being, safety and security

#### 7.2 Responsibility of the Principal

The Principal: - when deciding on measures which will be used to encourage good behaviour in the school must specifically include measures to prevent bullying among students - before deciding on measures to encourage good behaviour, must consult with students registered at the school and their parents - safeguard and promote the welfare of all registered students whether they are on the school premises or elsewhere while in the lawful control or in the charge of a member of staff of the school

Responsibility of Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff

Teaching and Non-Teaching staff will:

- Model high standards of personal pro-social behaviour
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying behaviour
- Emphasise the importance for students to seek help from a trusted adult about bullying behaviour when it happens or is observed
- Explain the implications to students of allowing the bullying behaviour to continue unchecked
- Listen sensitively to anyone who has been bullied, take what is said seriously, and provide reassurance that appropriate action will be taken
- Ensure students 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
- When dealing with allegations of bullying behaviour staff may use the Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF) and respond using the guidance set out in Section 8 – Responding to a Bullying Concern.

Bullying is often reported to staff by parents/carers. Such complaints will be met openly and sympathetically. When communication with the parents/carers of students displaying bullying behaviour, staff need to:

- Acknowledge that the parent/carer may be under stress as a result of having to discuss an incident with a member of staff. It is important to understand that sometimes a parent's perception of a situation can be one sided and dependent on the

child's subjective perspective. In cases of alleged bullying behaviour, it is important to be open minded. Children who display bullying behaviour will often dismiss their behaviour as banter or 'messaging about' - Try to get clear facts from the parent/carer but don't cross-examine or emphasise inconsistencies in their version of events. - Ensure that you have already gathered as much reliable information as possible and be able to confirm if the behaviour meets the definition of bullying outlined in this policy. - Ensure that the parents/carers understand how their child's behaviour conforms to Erne Integrated College's agreed definition of bullying. - Share your concern about what has been happening to the child experiencing bullying.

- 8 REPORTING A BULLYING CONCERN 8.1 How Students Can Report a Concern
- Students are encouraged to raise concerns or to 'get help' if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another student with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff. Students can raise concerns to a trusted member of staff, Parents/Carers can report a Concern It is the responsibility of parents and carers to raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour at the earliest opportunity. It is also important to encourage parents/carers of the need to encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'. Within Erne Integrated College, the process of parents/carers reporting bullying concerns is:
- In the first instance, all bullying concerns should be reported to the 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 Pastoral Care.
  - Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Head of Pastoral Care to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to the Principal.
  - Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Principal to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to the BOG
- If the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. The procedures are available on the College website. It is important to note that all reports of bullying concerns received from students and/or parents/carers will be responded to in line with this policy and that feedback will be given 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 his/her parents/carers.

## 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 NIABF Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource, the member of staff responsible

shall: • Clarify facts and perceptions • Check records (SIMS) • 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 students 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 interventions as necessary

Erne Integrated College in line with NIABF advocates a restorative approach to responding to bullying behaviour. Interventions will focus on responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. (Reference: Bullying Levels and Targeted Interventions). When responding to a bullying concern, 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. Assurances will be given to the person raising the concern that the matter has been dealt with. Information regarding any action taken regarding a student cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that student and his/her parents/carers.

## 10. RECORDING

In accordance to the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, Erne Integrated College will keep a written record of all relevant information related to reports of bullying concerns, and may use a BCAF (Bullying Concern Assessment Form), including: 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 College'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.

## 11 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF

All teaching and non-teaching staff complete safeguarding training. The Board of Governors also complete training Erne Integrated College is committed to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions.

## 12. MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY

To appropriately monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors shall be kept informed of any recorded incidents.

- This Anti-Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required every 4 years, in consultation with staff, students and their parents/carers,

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES in the development and implementation of this Anti-Bullying policy, the Board of Governors has been mindful of related policies.