

# BALLYMENA ACADEMY

# Parents' Handbook 2025/2026



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## MISSION STATEMENT

# Ballymena Academy cares for the individual and inspires learning and achievement.

In Ballymena Academy we value the important role you play in supporting the work and ethos of the school. We hope that throughout your daughter/son's school career our partnership will strengthen as we work together in nurturing their values and interest in learning and in developing their knowledge and skills.

This handbook aims to provide you with a range of information about many aspects of school life. In addition, at the beginning of each year you will receive a pamphlet outlining key features of the year ahead, for example, term dates, the curriculum structure, the pastoral team, co-curricular activities and a calendar of events.

We hope that you will find this publication helpful and would welcome any comments or suggestions regarding its content and format.

## SCHOOL AIMS

The school aims to provide a caring environment in which pupils can realise their full potential and pursue excellence in all their activities.

### *Moral & Spiritual*

To encourage the growth of moral and spiritual awareness so that our pupils may become responsible and tolerant citizens.

### *Personal*

To develop in our pupils such personal qualities as confidence, respect and independence.

### *Social*

To help all pupils to live a fuller and more abundant life through forming relationships and participating in co-curricular activities.

### *Intellectual*

To ensure that each pupil follows a broad and balanced curriculum which will be responsive to the needs of the individual.

### *Vocational*

To provide for each pupil experiences which are enjoyable and challenging, using methods and materials appropriate to the subject and level of study.

### *Cultural*

To achieve high levels of success in public examinations.

To develop in our pupils the academic and social skills, concepts and attitudes which will enable them to cope with the demands of life now and in the future.

To foster within each pupil a sense of pride in Ballymena Academy.

To develop an aesthetic appreciation, an interest in and enthusiasm for creative and artistic endeavor.

# THE CURRICULUM

The School aims to provide a curriculum for all of our young people which:

- fulfils statutory requirements;
- is characterised by breadth, balance, coherence, relevance and progression;
- is responsive to the needs of the individual and society.

Information about the curriculum structure for each year group will be provided in pamphlet form at the beginning of each academic year.

## Key Stage 3

In the first three years, pupils follow the Northern Ireland Curriculum and experience a wide range of subjects –

Art	Home Economics
Careers Education	Local and Global Citizenship
Digital Technology	Mathematics (with Financial Capability)
Drama	Music
Education for Employability	
English ( <i>with Media Education</i> ) P.E.	
French	Personal Development
Games	Religious Education
Geography	Science (Physics, Chemistry, Biology)
German	Spanish
History	Technology

Key Stage 3 is completed at the end of Year 10. Pupils also make their choice of GCSE subjects at this stage - an extensive range of subjects is available. The following are currently offered in addition to those subjects offered at Key Stage 3 - Agriculture, Business Studies, Classical Civilisation, Construction, English Literature, Essential Skills, Further Mathematics, Media Studies, Occupational Studies and Religious Studies.

Through study of the above subjects pupils will have the opportunity to develop the following skills and personal capabilities - Communication; Using Mathematics; I.C.T.; Managing Information; Thinking, Problem Solving, Decision Making; Being Creative; Self-Management; Working with Others.

Pupils may also have an opportunity to take a taster course in Mandarin and can opt to work towards qualifications in this language.



## Key Stage 4

Years 11 and 12 prepare pupils for GCSE examinations. Normally pupils will enter for examinations in nine full course subjects.

## Sixth Form

In Year 13, the number of subjects studied, in preparation for 'AS' examinations, is reduced to four. Pupils have access to a range of enrichment activities developing knowledge and skills which prepare them for adult life.

At the end of Year 13, pupils sit 'AS' modules. The final 'A2' modules which make up the complete 'A-Level' are taken in Year 14.

## SCHOOL CAREER

### Broad and Balanced Curriculum

	Year	
Key Stage 3	8	
	9	
	10	GCSE subjects chosen End of Key Stage
Key Stage 4	11	G.C.S.E Modules in some subjects
	12	GCSE Examinations
Sixth Form	13	AS Level Examinations
	14	A2 Level Examinations

### Co-Curricular Activities Pastoral Support and Careers Guidance

## PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral support provided by a dedicated staff ensures that respect for the individual and care for the overall well-being of each pupil are at the heart of our school community. A caring commitment permeates all aspects of school life. Teachers actively guide and support their pupils. The academic and social welfare and development of pupils is managed by a Head of Year, assisted by a Pastoral Adviser and a team of Tutors.

### **The Head of Year (HOY)**

The HOY is in daily contact with the Pastoral Adviser and Tutors and will follow up any matters of concern brought to his/her attention. Parents should feel free to contact the HOY if they have any concerns about their child's welfare and/or progress.

### **The Pastoral Adviser (PA)**

The Pastoral Adviser liaises with the Tutors and the HOY and provides additional support for pupils, if necessary. It is hoped that pupils will find the Pastoral Adviser and indeed all members of the Pastoral Care Team approachable and realise that advice and guidance will always be available to them.

### **The Tutor**

Each pupil is assigned to the care of a Form Tutor. The Tutor is responsible for registration each morning of his/her tutor group and hence will be in daily contact with each pupil. The Tutor conducts a weekly meeting of the tutor group, following guidelines provided by the HOY, which help establish good standards of work, behaviour and appearance and help secure good relationships and rapport with pupils. It is hoped that a pupil will feel free to approach his/her Tutor about any matter.

At important transition points Information events are provided for parents. These events enable the school to provide parents with important information and an opportunity to discuss various issues with relevant staff.

## HOME / SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

We value the important role parents play in supporting the work and ethos of the school. The strong home/school partnership that exists helps to provide your son/daughter with every opportunity to fulfil his/her potential. The following are ways in which we seek to inform and work in consultation with you.

Parents' Consultations (details of precise dates will be forwarded). Parents of pupils will be invited to visit the school to meet with subject teachers and discuss the progress of their children.

Year 8	: January	Year 11	: March
Year 9	: March	Year 12	: October
Year 10	: February	Year 13	: November
		Year 14	: October

### Reports

Progress reports for **Years 12 and 14** are sent in October, December and March. A full report is issued in February after the Senior Exams.

Progress reports for **Year 13** are sent in December and March. A full report is issued in February after the Senior Exams.

Progress reports for **Year 11** are sent in October, December, March and June. A full report is issued in February after the Senior Exams.

A report on work and progress for pupils in **Years 8, 9 and 10**, is sent twice a year in December and June.

### Careers Guidance

All pupils in Years 10, 12 and 14 have one-to-one guidance interviews with a careers tutor to discuss option choices at key transition points of their school career. Parents are welcome to attend these interviews.

Year 10 : January / February / June  
Year 12 : February / March and August  
Year 14 : September – December

### General Information

Information is forwarded to parents throughout the year about events and other matters. The Board of Governors' Annual Report to Parents is distributed in October/November. Parents may contact the school at any time should they have any concerns regarding their child's welfare and/or progress.

## THE SCHOOL DAY

TIME	PERIOD
7:45—8:55	Co-curricular activities
8:55—9:00	Registration
9:00—9:15	Assemblies and Tutor Groups
9:15—9:50	1
9:50—10:25	2
10:25—11:15	3 and Break Time
10:25—10:40	Break Time (Yr8 –10, 13)
11:00—11:15	Break Time (Yr11, 12, 14)
11:15—11:50	4
11:50—12:25	5
12:25—1:00	6      Years 10, 11, 13 Lunch Time
1:00—1:35	7      Years 8 & 9 Lunch Time
1:35—2:10	8      Years 12 & 14 Lunch Time
2:10—2:45	9
2:45—3:20	10
3:20—5:00	School ends & Co-curricular activities

### Religious Education

Religious Education is a component part of the curriculum in Years 8-12 in accordance with statutory requirements. Parents may request withdrawal of their child from Religious Education and/or collective worship on grounds of conscience by writing to the Principal.

### Homework

Homework forms an essential part of the school curriculum and to this end the school seeks to work in partnership with parents.

### Learning Organiser

Pupils will normally have some work to do each evening. This work should be recorded in their learning organiser. Parents are encouraged to see that homework is completed with care and asked to sign the organiser at the end of each week.

## SCHOOL LIBRARY

The Fullerton Library provides an information service for pupils and staff and houses a growing collection of useful resources.

Facilities: A range of periodicals, fiction and information books available for loan, comprehensive reference section with a selection of encyclopedia collections and supervised filtered Internet access.

A librarian works closely with pupils and teaching staff to ensure that library resources meet the needs of the school.

## I.C.T. ACCESS

Apart from use during class time, pupils may use the I.C.T. resources in the library after school hours. I.C.T. resources in the Sixth Form Centre can be used by pupils in Years 13 and 14 before, during and after school. The school has filtered broadband Internet access. Pupils are required to sign a responsibility

## CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Pupils are actively encouraged to develop their moral, social, physical and intellectual selves through participation in a range of sporting, cultural, environmental and community-based activities.

The enthusiasm and dedication displayed by both pupils and teachers towards developing 'the whole person' is one of the key aspects of the school's ethos.

Details of the co-curricular activities available to specific year groups are published in the Information Pamphlet for Parents which is made available on the school website at the beginning of each Autumn term.

# PUPIL WELFARE

## Attendance

There is a high correlation between attendance at school and the realisation of the school's aims, which are designed to enable pupils to achieve their full potential. It is our intention, in partnership with parents, to encourage full attendance and punctuality in order that pupils may take full advantage of educational and developmental opportunities and also develop positive attitudes which will prepare them for adult and working life. A copy of the relevant sections of the school's Pupil Attendance Policy is included on pages 17-19 of this handbook. A full copy is available on the school website or on request.

## Safeguarding and Child Protection

The school has a detailed policy on Child Protection based on guidelines issued by the Department of Education. This policy is available on the school website or on request. Separate summary guidelines have been issued by the Board of Governors to assist staff, parents and pupils in the implementation of this policy. The guideline summary for pupils can be found in their Learning Organisers. The guideline summary for parents is included on pages 20 and 21 of this handbook.

## Addressing Bullying Policy

Bullying involves the willful, conscious desire physically or mentally to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. It is a form of anti-social behaviour which is unacceptable. It is wrong and has no place within the school. A copy of the school's Anti-bullying Policy along with Guidelines and Advice to Parents can be found on pages 22-27 of this handbook.

## PUPIL WELFARE

### Self-service Cafeteria

The school operates a cafeteria system in the Dining Hall where pupils have the opportunity to select from quite an extensive menu. Payment is made by use of a Biometric System, to which pupils may credit money via 'revaluator' machines at designated points in the school. These machines accept either £10 or £5 notes and also £1 and 50p coins. Cash is not accepted in the Dining Hall. On the first day it is important that pupils bring with them sufficient money with which to credit their account. It is suggested that at least £5 is credited initially to cover the first few days. On Subsequent occasions the account may be credited on-line using ParentMail.

The school continues to promote healthy eating - this is reflected in the menus available. We cannot however dictate to pupils when it comes to their own choice of food items. The school will provide, on request from a parent, a history of purchases made by his/her son or daughter over a period of time.

Food is also available to senior pupils in the Sixth Form Centre at break and lunch time. In addition to lunches, the Dining Hall is open for breakfast from 8.30am and at break time. The Dining Hall 'Snack Box' is also open briefly after school.

Packed lunches may be brought to school and consumed in the Dining Hall.

### The Medical Room

This school has a first aid area with designated trained staff, who, in the event of illness or injury are available to assess and care for the pupil. In the event of serious injury, the emergency services and parent/guardian will be notified as soon as possible. A pupil who is feeling so unwell that they are unable to return to class will remain in the medical room until parent/guardian has been notified and arrangements made for their collection.

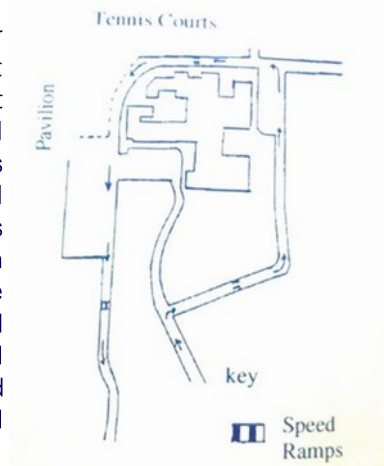


## TRAFFIC WITHIN THE SCHOOL GROUNDS

Arrangements have been made to try to ensure, as far as possible, the safety of pupils and the safety and convenience of all users of the grounds.

Access is provided from the Bus/Train Station to a path within the school grounds which ensures that pupils do not have to use the busy Galgorm Road. **Pupils should never use this path while alone or, even in small groups, after dark.**

In the interests of safety all cars delivering or collecting pupils should turn right at the foot of the hill on the main drive and proceed past the rear of the Dining Hall Kitchen. Girls will disembark or embark at the entrances opposite the tennis courts; boys will disembark or embark at the entrances opposite the pavilion. Cars should then proceed straight down the 'back' avenue leaving the grounds by the gate on the Old Galgorm Road. **Only before 8.30 a.m. and after 5.00 p.m.** may pupils be left or picked up at the front entrance of the school buildings.



In the interests of safety, cars should adhere to signage and are not permitted to park on the footpaths. Parking at the front of the school is strictly not permitted and all parking should ensure that other parked cars are not blocked.

Again, in the interests of safety, the Speed Limit of 15 m.p.h. within the grounds must be strictly observed by all users and great care taken at all times.

All pedestrians must use the footpath beside the main driveway.

Only in unavoidable circumstances should pupils be on the school premises before 8.30 am or after 5.00 pm and, in these cases, they should remain in the Assembly Hall and entrance hall respectively. There are, of course, circumstances where pupils can be on the premises while taking part in an organised activity under the supervision of a member of staff. The locations of pupils at other times are explained in the Pupil Regulations.

## THE SIXTH FORM CENTRE

The aim of the Centre is to provide a facility where pupils may develop self-discipline, responsible attitudes and leadership qualities which prepare them for the transition from secondary to tertiary education; it is also intended that pupils acquire improved research and study skills and take on increasing responsibility for their own learning.

The Centre is managed by a Vice Principal together with the members of the Sixth Form Committee.

The Centre contains a large recreation area with servery facilities, a locker area, computer suite, classroom, a Silent Study area and a Quiet Study area. It is for the exclusive use of our Sixth Form pupils.

The Silent Study area is supervised by staff and pupils in Year 14 are required to register their attendance at study. This is monitored by the Centre Manager.

A car park, specifically for sixth formers, is situated behind the Centre. Sixth

## SIXTH FORM AGREEMENT

Before enrolling as a member of the Sixth Form, pupils and their parents are required to read and agree to the rules and regulations laid out in the Sixth Form Agreement, the Sixth Form Constitution and the Guide to the Sixth Form. The Sixth Form Agreement is the basis of membership of the Sixth Form.

# PUPIL REGULATIONS AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Pupil Regulations are designed to ensure, as far as possible, that:

- the work of Ballymena Academy proceeds in an orderly and effective manner;
- the school environment is safe and pleasant for all who work in it;
- pupils feel secure, and confident of what is expected of them.

The success and enjoyment which pupils can obtain from their time in a school depends on every element of the school community, from the most senior governor to the most junior pupil, meeting their obligations.

Pupils, therefore, have their responsibilities, like every other group, and the continued support of parents in helping their children take these responsibilities seriously is deeply appreciated.

A copy of these regulations can be found on pages 28-36. As these documents are updated yearly, copies of the most recent version can be found in the Learning Organiser.

## DOCUMENTS FOR REFERENCE

The school has policy documents detailing school policies and procedures covering a spectrum of school life. The policies taken together occupy a very substantial amount of paper and are not normally issued in bulk to parents. Individual policies are available on request and all policies are available for inspection by parents in the school office. It is important that at the beginning of your child's grammar school career he/she fully understands our basic requirements concerning attendance, discipline and personal behaviour towards others. For this reason the relevant policies have been included in the next section of this handbook along with other important documents.

Attendance Policy

Safeguarding Policy - summary

Addressing Bullying Policy

Code of Conduct

Pupil Regulations

Positive Behaviour Policy

Careers Guidance and Education Policy

Games Provision

Drugs Policy - summary

**Ballymena Academy Parents' Handbook**

# PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

## RATIONALE

It is the policy of Ballymena Academy to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and in which the pupils feel valued and secure. The School seeks to maintain/improve the overall attendance of pupils. Regular attendance is essential if each young person is to achieve his or her potential and have full access to the School Curriculum. There is a high correlation between attendance at school and the realisation of the school's aims of supporting pupil self-esteem and high academic achievement.

## AIMS

In addition to discharging legal obligations to record attendance accurately in the morning and afternoon, it is our intention, in partnership with parents, to encourage full attendance and punctuality of arrival at school in order that pupils may:-

- take full advantage of their educational and developmental opportunities
- establish good patterns of attendance and punctuality to carry forward into adult and working life
- be discouraged from truancy, which may lead to anti-social or criminal behaviour

It is also our aim to:-

- foster, in conjunction with Education Authority (EA) initiatives such as "Miss School, Miss Out", a positive approach to attendance.
- be proactive in identifying and resolving any problems or potential problems of which absence or lateness may be an indicator or precursor
- provide advice, support and guidance to Parents/Guardians and pupils
- ensure not only that staff roles and responsibilities are known and implemented but also that the roles and responsibilities of Parents/Guardians and pupils are clearly understood

## OBJECTIVES

In pursuance of these aims, it will be considered normal good practice to:-

- keep detailed records of pupil attendance (morning and afternoon) in line with the school's policies and procedures

- inform parents as quickly as possible, where appropriate, if a pupil fails to attend school/class
- identify patterns of non-attendance at an early stage and work to resolve any personal/social difficulties, supporting young people through interventions to achieve good levels of attendance and punctuality
- regularly discuss, in liaison with Education Welfare Service (EWS), matters pertaining to attendance at the school or pupils who may individually present concerns.
- inform the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) when pupil attendance is deemed unsatisfactory
- keep a record of lateness to school and, where appropriate, inform parents
- apply such sanctions as are deemed appropriate, in line with Pupil Regulations and the Positive Behaviour Policy
- Regular attendance reports to the Board of Governors using Benchmark Attendance Data supplied by the Department of Education

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The implementation of this policy depends upon pupils and their parents and a wide range of staff, each with their specific roles:-

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs they may have, by regular school attendance or otherwise.

### **Parents/Guardians should:-**

- emphasise the importance of attendance to their child
- ensure that their child attends school regularly
- ensure that their child arrives on time for registration
- require that their child attends all classes
- avoid taking their child on holiday during term time as this cannot be authorised by the School and is actively discouraged
- avoid, where possible, arranging appointments (e.g. medical/dental) or engagements (e.g. driving lessons) during the school day
- Notify the school, by telephone, on their child's first day of absence, if not for a pre-agreed reason
- notify the school if a pupil is likely to be absent for more than three days
- provide a letter to their child's tutor explaining absence on the first day he/she returns to school to support the School in meeting DENI requirements

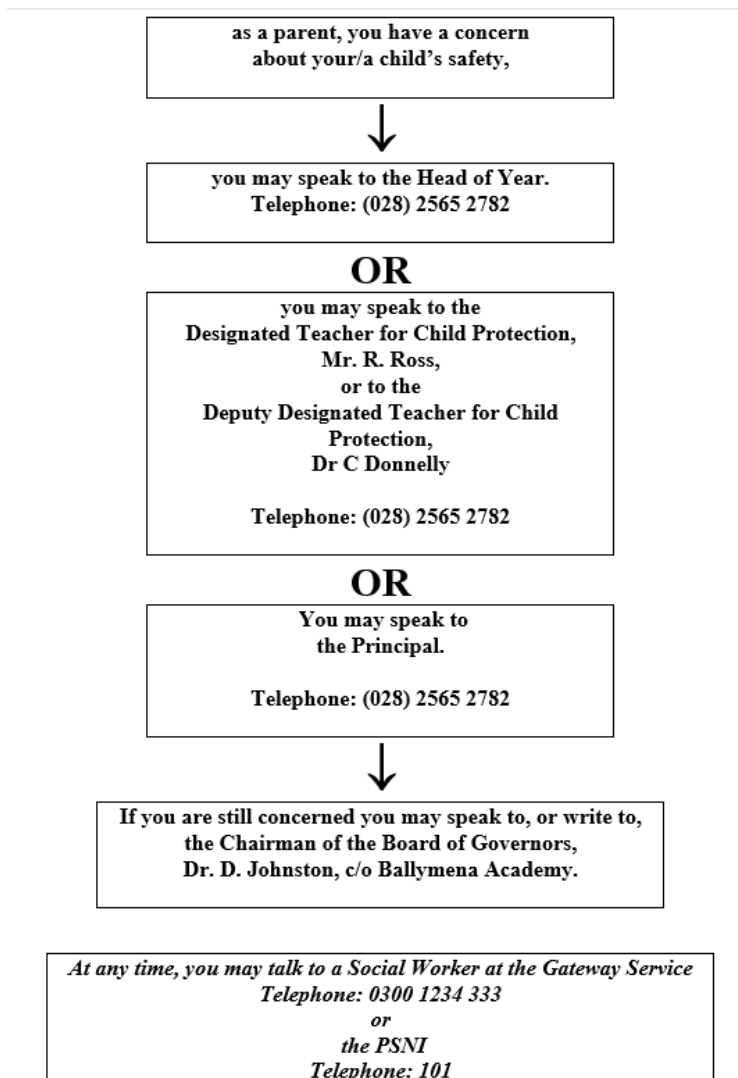
- provide a letter to their child's Head of Year (HOY) at least two days before a planned absence
- sign and return, when required, pro-formas regarding absence or lateness
- co-operate with the school in seeking to overcome problems of non-attendance or lateness
- discuss issues with the HOY where a child appears reluctant to attend school
- liaise with the HOY on issues around long term absence

#### Pupils should:

- make every effort to attend school regularly and not take days off unless it is unavoidable
- make every effort to arrive at school in time for registration
- fulfil their timetable by attending every class punctually
- where absence has occurred, bring to their tutor a letter of explanation from their parent/guardian on the first day back after absence
- ensure subsequently that they show their absence slip to those teachers whose classes they have missed
- where absence is planned (e.g. for an appointment), bring a letter from their parent/guardian to their HOY at least two days in advance
- ensure subsequently that they show their planned absence slip to those teachers whose classes they will miss
- where lateness has occurred, sign in on arrival at the appropriate place (Office) and explain their lateness to their tutor at their next registration
- when issued with a Confirmation of Attendance slip, have it completed and returned promptly to their HOY
- avoid using class time, where possible, for dental/medical appointments
- understand that if they fail to comply with the provision of this policy that appropriate sanctions may be applied
- complete work provided during periods of longer absence, as agreed with the school
- catch up with work on their return to school
- absence from class for participation in co-curricular activities is considered a privilege, not a right, and all pupils are expected to catch up on missed work and meet all scheduled deadlines
- not leave school at any time during the school day without first receiving permission from their HOY or, failing that, a Vice-Principal or the Principal. In the case of illness, permission may be given by the person in charge of sick-bay. In all cases the Office should be informed by the member of staff.

## CHILD PROTECTION - PROCEDURE SUMMARY

The primary responsibility for safeguarding and protection of children rests with parents who should feel confident about raising any concerns they have in relation to their child. If a parent has a potential child protection concern:



The Designated Governor for Child Protection is Mrs. A. Laughlin

**Ballymena Academy Parents' Handbook**



- Parents should be aware that once informed of a concern, complaint or allegation in regard to Child Protection certain procedures must be followed by the school.
- The Principal is informed.
- Where a complaint is about possible abuse by a member of the school staff, the Principal may need to seek discreet preliminary clarification. It is not, however, the responsibility of the school to investigate suspected abuse or make extensive enquiries.
- Once satisfied that a bona fide complaint has been made the Principal will immediately
  - inform the designated teacher who will initiate the record of the complaint
  - consult, in confidence, the designated officer of the Education & Library Board to form an initial assessment as to whether or not sufficient substance exists in the allegation to warrant further action.
  - consult the Chairman of the Board of Governors.
- In the light of advice taken, the Principal, in consultation with the Chairman of the Board of Governors, will decide that
  - the allegation is without substance and no further action is necessary

**OR** an immediate referral to the Social Services or the Police is warranted

**OR** the allegation concerns inappropriate behaviour which needs to be considered under the disciplinary procedures.
- Where the complaint is concerning possible child abuse by the Principal the above procedures will be followed save that the role of the Principal will be exercised by the Chairman of the Board of Governors.
- A record of the complaint will be placed in a separate confidential file indicating the nature of the complaint, when, by whom and to whom it was made and the action taken.

\* The School's Complaints Policy is readily available to Parents and Carers.

\* A full copy of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is available from the school, on request, and is also published on the school website [www.ballymenaacademy.org.uk](http://www.ballymenaacademy.org.uk)

# ADDRESSING BULLYING POLICY

## Introduction

At Ballymena Academy we believe that the safeguarding of all our pupils is paramount, and that this policy supports our work in creating a secure and caring environment. We believe that everyone in our school community has a role to play in creating a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for all. We acknowledge that bullying type behaviour exists in all school communities and the wider society. Therefore, we seek to provide an open climate where pupils, staff and parents are free to talk about, and address these behaviours in a supportive manner. Our aim is to embed and develop a culture where bullying type behaviour is not tolerated.

The purpose of this policy is to define bullying type behaviour, outline roles and responsibilities, clarify the preventative curriculum, highlight processes for reporting, explain recording formats and depict effective responses to bullying type behaviour.

Bullying type concerns relating to school staff, other staff or parents is managed through:- our visitor's policy & TNC 2009/11 Policy and Procedure to combat Bullying and Harassment of Teachers.

If there is dissatisfaction with the school response regarding a bullying type concern, complaints should be managed in line with the school's complaints policy accessible on the school website.

## Aim

To promote a supportive, caring and safe environment for pupils in which they will have no fear of being bullied.

## Principles

- The organisation of the school positively supports the maintaining of a caring community which promotes tolerance, mutual respect, courtesy, thoughtfulness and kindness.
- The school seeks to ensure a high degree of collective vigilance in order to minimise opportunities for bullying type behaviour involving a registered pupil at the school on the premises of the school during the school day, while travelling to or from school during the school term, while the pupil is in the charge of a member of staff or while the pupil is receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of the school and provided elsewhere than on the school premises.
- Members of the school community should be aware of the types and causes of bullying type behaviour ; signs of bullying type behaviour; and established procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying type behaviour.
- Established procedures are followed where the school has been alerted to possible incidents of bullying type behaviour.
- The school seeks to create and maintain a climate where pupils, parents and staff feel confident that any complaints of bullying type behaviour are taken seriously.
- The school seeks to ensure that any complaints of bullying type behaviour are dealt with promptly, consistently, sensitively and, where possible, discreetly.

- The school records, through Senior Staff and Heads of Year, details of incidents of bullying and alleged bullying type behaviour using appropriate Management Information System (MIS) which refers to motivation, methods and how the incident was addressed together with the outcomes. These are recorded on the Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF).
  - Parents are made aware of the school's Addressing Bullying Policy.
  - A close working partnership between home and school is encouraged in the prevention, detection and reduction of bullying type behaviours.
  - The school provides support and opportunity for counselling of both the pupil experiencing bullying type behaviour and the child who is displaying bullying type behaviour.
  - The aim of all action is to stop the behaviour and support all the pupils involved.
  - It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors, in liaison with the Principal, to monitor the effectiveness of the Addressing Bullying Policy. To this end, the Board of Governors will:
    - maintain a standing item on the agenda - incidents of bullying type behaviour will be noted.
    - identify trends and priorities for action.
    - assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at preventing bullying type behaviour.
    - assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at responding to bullying type behaviour.
  - The Board of Governors is informed of preventative activity and reported concerns.
- This policy is part of the wider school approach to safeguarding, through consultation with pupils, parents and pastoral staff.

It is a legal requirement that the Addressing Bullying Policy be reviewed at intervals of no less than four years and following any serious or significant incident, which highlights the need for such a review. It must also be reviewed when directed to by the Department of Education following new guidance. As such, the Addressing Bullying Policy will be reviewed as required, in consultation with the school community, on or before **August 2028**.

### **Guidelines for Addressing Bullying Type Behaviour**

The school is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all pupils so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying type behaviour of any kind is totally unacceptable and has no place in the school.

Everyone has the right to feel safe in school, and on the way to and from school.

A close, working partnership between home and school is encouraged in the prevention, detection and elimination of bullying type behaviour.

Bullying type behaviour of any kind is totally unacceptable and has no place in this school. We want all pupils to feel that our school is a caring, friendly and safe place to be. They have the right to feel safe in school, and on the way to and from school.

All staff and pupils alike should

- treat others as they would like to be treated;
- accept that not everyone is the same;

- speak in a way which does not offend or harm others; and
- behave in a way which is neither threatening nor hurtful.

## What is bullying type behaviour?

'Bullying includes but is not limited to the repeated use of any verbal, written or electronic communication, any other act or any combination of those, by a pupil or group of pupils against another pupil or groups of pupils, with the intention of causing physical or emotional harm to that pupil or group of pupils.' Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016

The following list is **not exhaustive** but bullying type behaviour can take forms such as:

**Physical:** pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, physical intimidation, use of items as a weapon and any other forms of violence, or threats of the same.

**Verbal:** name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, insults, persistent teasing, jokes, abusive or threatening notes/social media messages/phone calls.

**Emotional/Social:** tormenting, humiliating, socially excluding, spreading rumours, manipulating situations, controlling behaviour.

**Sexual propositioning:** unwanted physical contact, abusive comments, sexting, or vulgar gestures.

**Prejudicial:** taunts, graffiti or gestures based on race, disability, religion, political views or sexual orientation.

**Damage to property or theft:** clothing, school books or other personal property may be hidden, damaged or stolen.

**Electronic communication:** use of technology to harass, hurt, threaten, embarrass or target, impersonating someone online to cause hurt, sharing images online to embarrass someone. Cyber bullying can occur anytime, anywhere, the audience can be large and involved quickly and the scale of consequences of actions can be unintentional

## Why do people display bullying type behaviour?

Some people display this type of behaviour because they:

- like the feeling of power and like to impress;
- are unable to accept difference;
- are selfish, arrogant or spoilt and expect everyone to do what they say;
- feel insecure, inferior, humiliated or lonely;
- have been abused and/or experienced bullying type behaviour themselves;
- are under pressure to succeed at all costs;
- do not fit in with the other pupils;
- feel no sense of achievement;
- have problems within their home environment;
- are jealous, through low self-esteem or selfish ambition;
- allow themselves to be pressurised by their peer group

### The effects of bullying type behaviour

Bullying type behaviour can result in

- insecurity, sadness, loneliness, depression or anxiety;
- loss of confidence and motivation;                      low self-esteem;

- shyness, being withdrawn; poor academic achievement;
- isolation, and self-harm, threatened or attempted suicide.

Other signs could be

- belongings lost/stolen; unexplained injuries;
- fear of school or truancy; requesting or stealing money;
- changes to sleep and eating patterns, physical and mental health complaints;
- poor attendance; and displaying bullying type behaviour towards others

### **Recognising possible signs in a pupil experiencing bullying type behaviour**

A child may indicate by his/ her behaviour that he/she is experiencing bullying type behaviour. If your child shows some of the following signs, bullying type behaviour may be occurring, and you may want to ask if someone is displaying bullying type behaviour towards them.

Children may:

- be frightened of walking to or from school,
- change their usual routes,
- not want to go on the school bus,
- beg you to drive them to school,
- be unwilling to go to school (they may even be school-phobic),
- feel ill in the mornings,
- begin truanting,
- begin to do poorly in their school work,
- come home regularly with clothes or books destroyed,
- come home starving (lunch has been taken)
- become withdrawn, start stammering, lack confidence,
- become distressed and anxious; stop eating,
- start self-harming or attempt or threaten suicide,
- cry themselves to sleep; have nightmares,
- repeatedly “lose” their possessions and/or money,
- ask for money or begin stealing money (to pay someone),
- refuse to say what is wrong (too frightened to explain physical injuries),
- have unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts,
- begin to display bullying type behaviour towards other children or siblings,
- become aggressive and unreasonable, or
- give improbable excuses to explain any of the above

### **What to do if you are concerned your child may be experiencing bullying type behaviour**

If you are worried about your child

- do not ignore the problem.
- encourage your child to talk to you about his/her feelings - tell your child that you are

always willing to listen, and that you want to help and support him/her whatever the problem is.

- take whatever your child says seriously and find out exactly what has been going on.
- try not to over-react, even if you are furious - it may frighten your child into silence, and children who are experiencing such behaviour should be encouraged to talk, not retreat.
- do not promise to keep the information secret, but reassure your child that you will help him/her sort out the problem.
- be positive and reassure him/her that the bullying type behaviour is not his/her fault and make sure that he/she feels protected.
- discuss possible ways of changing the situation, and try to minimise opportunities for bullying behaviour.
- advise your child not to resort to the same tactics as the child who is displaying the bullying type behaviour since that can make matters worse.
- build up his/her self-confidence with plenty of praise and affection.
- Encourage him/her to do something he/she is particularly good at.
- encourage your child to develop new hobbies or interests which may lead to a supportive group of friends, both in and out of school.
- take any threats of suicide or other desperate pleas seriously and seek help - better safe than sorry. Young people sometimes go to extremes if they are miserable. It is vitally important that the school is made aware of any such circumstances. Any information given in this regard will be treated in the strictest confidence.
- try to sort out the bullying at first as quietly and constructively as possible

If your child is experiencing bullying type behaviour through electronic communication:

- get them to show you the messages and tell you at once if anything new happens.
- tell them never to respond to cyber-bullying or to abusive texts or the like
- make sure they only use moderated chatrooms
- tell them that bullying type behaviour usually stops once they tell other people
- if bullying type behaviour starts in a chatroom, tell them to leave, inform you and the moderator.
- tell them to never give out contact details or photographs of themselves on websites/ chatrooms.

In addition, report your concerns to the school, giving opportunity and time for the school to explore the concern fully and respond appropriately:

- Contact the Head of Year immediately and discuss the problem. If necessary, request a meeting and provide detailed background information. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.
- Arrange a follow-up appointment to discuss both the results of any investigations, and the outcomes.
- Try to give the situation time to change.
- If there is no improvement, make an appointment with the Principal. If you feel that the alleged bullying incident is significant you may wish to speak to the Principal at the

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outset.

### **What to do if your child is displaying type bullying behaviour**

If you learn that your child is displaying bullying behaviour,

- Try to stay calm.
- Try not to become angry and defensive.
- Ask exactly what your child has been doing.
- Ask if he/she has behaved like this before.

Talk to teachers, and to other parents. The more you can find out about what has been going on, the easier it will be to work out why your child has been displaying bullying behaviour, and what can be done about it. It is in their best long-term interest and that of the child who is experiencing bullying type behaviour, that the issue is dealt with. Make contact with the appropriate pastoral staff in school. The school will then provide support.

### **Helping your child to stop bullying type behaviour**

- Ask your child if he/she can explain what has happened, and why - try not to be too judgmental at this point.
- Reassure your child that you still love him/her - it is his/her behaviour you disapprove of.
- Try to ascertain the nature, frequency and duration of the bullying behaviour.
- Talk with your child and explore ways you can work together to stop his/her behaviour.
- Explain that the bullying type behaviour must stop, and that the situation may become worse if it does not.
- Explain how frightening the bullying type behaviour is for the victim, and try to encourage empathy.
- Work out a way for your child to make amends for the bullying type behaviour.
- Tell your child that you know he/she can change the bullying type behaviour. Give your child the confidence to try to change.
- Look for good behaviour from your child and praise it when it occurs. Create opportunities for him/her to shine.
- Set limits. Stop any show of aggression immediately, and help the child find other, non-aggressive ways of reacting.
- Explain that getting away from a situation where he/she can feel himself/herself losing his/her temper, or things getting out of hand, is not weakness. It is a sensible way of ensuring that the situation does not get worse.
- Try to spend as much time with your child as you can, especially listening to his/her concerns. Sometimes children bully other children as a way of getting attention.
- Make it clear that you do not accept such behaviour, and that there will be consequences at home, such as loss of privileges, if the behaviour does not stop.
- Talk to the school staff. Explain that your child is making an effort to change his/her behaviour. Ask what ideas they have to help.

Parents can help by controlling their own response, and by making it clear that any kind of bullying type behaviour is always unacceptable.

The school provides support and opportunity for counselling of both pupils who are subject to bullying type behaviour and to those who display bullying type behaviour.

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## PUPIL CODE OF CONDUCT

The following Code of Conduct is provided to help pupils understand the standard of behaviour expected of all pupils attending Ballymena Academy. It should be read in conjunction with Pupil Regulations, of which it is an important component.

**Courtesy and Respect** Courtesy and respect are to be shown to all members of the school community. Pupils should:

- Be polite and co-operate fully with members of staff at all times.
- Give way to members of staff and visitors at doors and in corridors
- Knock before entering a classroom when a teacher is present.
- Always address staff in a courteous manner, using the appropriate title.
- Never address a member of staff while standing with hands in pockets or slouching against a wall.
- Co-operate fully with prefects on duty.
- Accept the right of others to hold views and express opinions which may differ from their own.

### **Behaviour**

Mobile Electronic Devices (MEDs), including phones and earphones/pods, may only be used before the start of school (8:30am), after school, and in a class or other area where specific permission is given by supervising staff or officially authorised. If MEDs are used on school premises, outside of normal school hours, the device must be used appropriately and no photographs or videos can be taken.

### **During Class Pupils should:**

- Arrive at class punctually and wait outside until any previous class has left.
- Have the books and materials necessary for the lesson.
- Enter the room quietly and sit in the usual seat (seating is at the discretion of the teacher).
- Immediately open books ready for work, without having to be told.
- Get on with work in an orderly manner.
- Remain seated during the lesson unless otherwise directed.
- Observe the usual norms of politeness (e.g. keep quiet while the teacher is talking; put up hand in response to general questioning and wait until invited to answer).
- Not eat or chew, or drink anything other than water, during class.
- Not leave any litter or generate graffiti.
- Note details of homework in Learning Organiser.
- When instructed to do so pack up books and ensure working area is tidy, with chair or stool pushed under the table.
- Leave class in an orderly fashion.

### **In all Classrooms Pupils should not:**

- Touch any special equipment or items on the teacher's desk or work area in any room.
- Interfere with wall displays or other materials belonging to peers.
- Sit on top of desks with feet on the seat.



- Sit on teacher's table/chair, cupboard tops, computer benches or heaters.
- Sit on window sills or lean out of windows.
- Write on white boards.
- Tamper with curtains.
- Leave litter.

#### **In Dining Hall and Lunch Areas Pupils should:**

- Be well-mannered and co-operate fully with the dining hall staff and teachers on duty.
- On leaving the Dining Hall, please ensure that tables are free from litter and that chairs are pushed under the table.
- Only use allocated areas for quiet recreation.
- Leave the allocated areas neat and tidy five minutes before the end of lunch-time.

#### **In Corridors Pupils should:**

- Walk, not run, on the right hand side of the corridors and staircases and according to directional guidance.
- Queue in an orderly manner outside classrooms in single file.
- Place all litter in the bins provided.
- Avoid leaving schoolbags in such a way as to cause a hazard.

#### **Online Classrooms** – Pupils should:

- Ensure that communications with staff are respectful.
- Ensure that work submitted is completed to a high standard and meets school expectations.
- Adhere to school protocols for online classrooms.

#### **Appearance** – Pupils should:

- Take pride in their appearance.
- Wear regulation uniform only, both in school and on the way to and from school.
- Be neat and tidy in appearance at all times (ties must be properly knotted and of an appropriate length, collars buttoned, shirts and blouses tucked in; blazers should be worn in corridors except in very warm weather).
- Be well groomed. Hair must be kept tidy and of a style and length acceptable to the school. For guidance, it should not be worn over the eyes or obscure vision at any time; boys' hair should be no longer than the top of the blazer collar. Extremes are to be avoided and bleaches or dyes that are in blatant contrast to the natural hair colour are not permitted. Shaven hair (below "number two") is not acceptable under these regulations. Boys should be clean shaven.

Pupils should be aware that:

- Nail varnish and gel or artificial nails are not allowed. [Sufficient time before the start of term should be allowed for removal.] Discreet make-up is acceptable only from Year 11. Obvious or extreme make-up, including 'fake tan', will be required to be removed.
- Ear cuffs and all facial jewellery (including sleepers or studs) are unacceptable. [Pupils are advised that sufficient time during holiday periods should be allowed for healing after a piercing.]
- Visible tattoos (body art) are not permitted.
- If a hoodie or fleece is worn it must be an official navy-blue school hoodie or micro-

fleece. Other hoodies and fleeces are not permitted at any time.

- School micro-fleeces may be worn under the blazer on the way to and from school but removed prior to the commencement of the school day, except in winter months as permission is indicated. Hoodies, including school hoodies, should not be worn under the blazer. School hoodies are only permitted for PE/Games.
- School jumpers/pullovers may be worn under blazers at any time. Coats and hoodies should not be worn under the blazer at any time.
- The school reserves the right to remove non-regulation items and ask parents to collect them from the school office.
- Outside of PE, games or organised activities, e.g. teams, unless specific permission has been given by staff, pupils should not be in sports kit other than for the actual activities. Where permission is given, regulation tracksuit bottoms must be worn: wearing shorts, skirt or leggings only, is not permitted.

Pupils may wear:-

- One watch, one signet ring and, at most, one stud per ear.
- **Lapel Badges** - no more than three from official school badges, B.B., G.B., Scouts, Guides, DoE, S.U., sports participation (Province, Ireland), Blood Donor, Music Festivals

**Property** Pupils should:

- Secure all personal belongings in their lockers or take them home.
- Ensure locker is locked at all times
- Keep their locker bays neat and tidy.
- Never borrow another pupil's property without permission.
- Respect school property and report any damage immediately.

**Graffiti on pupil property (e.g. bags, notebooks, files) is not acceptable.**

**Unacceptable Behaviour** Pupils must not:

- Use offensive language at any time or in any place while in school, travelling to and from school or taking part in any school activity.
- Engage in any form of bullying type behavior.
- Possess or use in school, or on the way to or from school, any tobacco product (including electronic cigarettes, vapes or similar products), alcoholic drink, illicit substances, pornographic material, offensive weapon, fireworks or laser pointers.
- Engage in behaviour which is likely to endanger self/others.
- Engage in selling of items without official permission of the school.
- Engage in behaviour which is likely to bring the name of the school into disrepute (such behaviour may result in exclusion).

This code of conduct will be implemented by all members of the school community and, where necessary, sanctions will be imposed by staff and/or prefects in accordance with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy. This code of conduct has been framed to be fair and to provide clear guidance to pupils. It is not possible, however, to be specific about all circumstances which may arise, or to cover all eventualities. In situations not explicitly mentioned in this code of conduct the Principal will exercise professional judgment on what is the reasonable way to proceed, in light of the provisions of this and other school policies, including the Positive Behaviour Policy and Pupil Regulations.

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# PUPIL REGULATIONS

## Introduction

These regulations are underpinned by the core value of RESPECT and are designed to ensure, as far as possible, that:

1. the work of Ballymena Academy proceeds in an orderly and effective manner;
2. the school environment is safe and pleasant for all who work in it;
3. pupils feel secure, and confident of what is expected of them.

Pastoral support is available in the school and any pupils who have a concern about their welfare or safety should report this to a member of staff (e.g. class tutor, pastoral adviser or head of year).

## 1. Time-keeping

1.1 Pupils are expected to arrive at school in good time to use lockers before registration (when permitted to do so). There should be no loitering at Bus Stops or at the Bus Station.

1.2 Pupils who arrive after registration (8:55 a.m. - 9.00 a.m.) should sign in at the office and move directly to tutor group or assembly, as appropriate. Pupils who are regularly late during the year will be subject to the staged process of Interventions and Escalating Sanctions.

1.3 After 9.15 a.m. pupils must report directly to the main office for registration. Pupils failing to register will be marked absent and a letter of explanation required.

## 2. Entering and Leaving the Building

2.1 Pupils are asked not to use the front door during the school day, leaving it free for the use of visitors and staff, unless instructed to do so.

2.2 In the interests of safety, pupils coming to or leaving school alone should use the main drive and not the bus path.

## 3. Pupil Location

3.1 Before classes: Pupils should not arrive before **8.30 a.m.**, unless this is unavoidable. Any pupil who does, should enter by the front door and wait in the Assembly Hall until the 8.30 a.m. bell before going to the cloakroom to leave belongings or organize materials from lockers. Pupils may then occupy classrooms under general supervision, unless directed otherwise.

3.2 At Break: Pupils may go outside, use the Assembly Hall, Dining Hall or next period classroom under general supervision (but not laboratories, workshops, Art/Home Economics rooms, gyms or Drama/Music Suites - unless a teacher is present). Locker bays should only be used for the collection of bags and books and other personal belongings. Pupils should go inside once the warning bell has sounded, collect books from their lockers and move to their next class.

3.3 At Lunch Time: Packed lunches should be eaten in the Dining Hall or Sixth Form

Centre. Areas are also assigned for quiet recreation, normally the Assembly Hall, but, if the weather is fine, pupils are encouraged to go outside. Pupils should not congregate in other areas e.g. locker bay, corridors, entrances.

Once the warning bell has sounded, all pupils should collect books from their lockers and move to classes.

Boys are not allowed in the Girls' locker bays and vice versa.

3.4 After 3.20 p.m. It is expected that pupils should leave the school premises by 3.45 p.m. unless participating in supervised activities. General supervision is provided in school until 5.00 p.m. Pupils involved in games periods or team practices should not stay out beyond the time of Staff supervision. After games or supervised sports activities, where time does not permit changing into regulation uniform, pupils are permitted to wear their sports kit home, covered by regulation hoodie, school micro-fleece and regulation tracksuit bottoms or leggings. Pupils who need to wait for late transport, may use the library or other designated area; they should not wander around the building nor loiter in the cloakroom areas.

3.5 After 5.00 p.m. Any pupil inside the building waiting to be collected should go to the front entrance hall. Pupils are not to wait elsewhere in the building for lifts after 5.00 p.m., when staff supervision ends.

3.6 Between the hours of 6.00 p.m. and 8.00 a.m. and at weekends. Pupils are not permitted on any part of the school premises unless attending a staff-supervised school activity.

3.7 Areas out of bounds unless permission is given

(a) The school grounds, apart from designated play areas and paths -- playground and, in better weather, pitches on the plateau.

(b) The Sixth Form Centre and the area adjacent to its entrance (Years 8 - 12).

(c) Locker bays (except before registration, during break and lunch times when leaving or collecting bags and books, after school and when collecting and returning P.E. bags).

3.8 Pupils should only use the allocated toilet areas for their year group and not loiter in these areas, nor exceed the maximum permitted numbers. Appropriate respectful behaviour is expected at all times.

#### **4. Safety**

4.1 Pupils should walk on the right hand side of the corridors and staircases according to directional guidance. There should be no running.

4.2 Queues outside classrooms should be in single file.

4.3 Window sills are not to be sat on.

4.4 Leaning out of windows is forbidden.

4.5 Special activity rooms (e.g. gyms and laboratories) should only be entered when a teacher is present or gives permission.

4.6 The railway crossing and the pond area are out of bounds to all pupils.

4.7 Cycling by pupils is not permitted within the school grounds.

4.8 In the event of a person suffering an injury pupils should seek help from the nearest member of staff or from designated first-aid staff whose names are given on school noticeboards. If the casualty is unable to walk, he/she should not be moved.

4.9 In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation, the instructions provided in each

room should be obeyed, with pupils leaving the building via the nearest safe exit and assembling at the appropriate place.

4.10 Sports bags may be left and collected from locker areas at appropriate times. School bags should be left in locker areas at PE/Games times as well as at Break and Lunch times. School bags should not be left in corridors.

4.11 In the interests of pupil health, nuts, products containing nuts, and energy drinks are not permitted to be brought to school.

## **5. Attendance**

5.1 Absence from school should be explained by a letter from Parent/Guardian. This should be brought on the first day back and given to the Class Tutor, who will provide an absence slip. The slip should be shown to Class Teachers for initialing.

5.2 Planned Absence: It is expected that pupils will not absent themselves from school for trivial reasons. However, if a real need arises, a letter should be brought to the Head of Year at least two days before the planned absence (e.g. medical/dental appointments, driving test, interviews at/visits to Universities, attendance at a wedding). Once the absence has been agreed, the Head of Year will give the pupil a permission slip and inform the school office. The pupil should then ensure that his/her subject teachers know in advance.

5.3.1 Pupils need specific permission to leave school at any time during the school day (including the lunch break). The Head of Year should be consulted or, failing that, a Vice-Principal or the Principal. (In the case of illness refer to section 6).

5.3.2 When leaving school for an appointment during the school day, pupils should sign out at the school office. Pupils should also remember to sign in again at the school office if they return before 3.20p.m.

5.4.1 Pupils unable to take part in games through illness, injury etc. should have a letter of explanation from Parent/Guardian and show this to the teacher in charge for signing. They should then go to a Supervised Study room and give the letter to the supervising teacher. Supervised Study for these pupils will finish at 3.20 p.m.

5.4.2 Pupils not participating in games for other reasons (e.g. forgotten kit) should also report to the teacher in charge and then go to a Supervised Study room until 3.20 p.m. Pupils who repeatedly forget their kit will be appropriately sanctioned.

5.5 Family Holidays: Permission will not be granted for family holidays other than in very exceptional circumstances. (Any request should be made in writing to the Principal.) Absences due to family holidays will be regarded as unauthorised absences and recorded on pupil records.

5.6 In the event of a pupil wishing to withdraw from the School, an appointment should be made to discuss the matter with the Principal. Any withdrawal of a pupil should then be confirmed in writing by the Parent/Guardian. Texts and other school property should be returned.

## **Illness during the school day**

6.1 In the interests of safety, pupils should always follow the instructions of the School Nurse or First-Aid staff.

## **During class time**

6.2 Pupils should ask permission from their class teacher before reporting to the School Nurse at the medical room.

6.3 Pupils should not enter the medical room without permission from the School Nurse or a member of the First-Aid staff.

6.4 Pupils should follow instructions of the School Nurse or First-Aid staff with regard to returning to class, staying in the medical room or going home. They should collect a signed medical slip to show to their class teacher(s). They should not leave the medical room without permission.

## **Break/lunch times and after school**

6.5 Pupils must not contact home without permission. Pupils should report to the School Nurse (up until 3.45 p.m.) or the First-Aid staff. If incapacitated, pupils should send to the School Nurse or First-Aid staff for assistance.

## **7 Pupil property**

7.1 Lockers are provided for all pupils. These should not be left unlocked. Any loss of key or damage to the locker should be reported immediately to the teacher in charge. Under special circumstances, e.g. where there is a reasonable suspicion that the locker may contain stolen property or materials forbidden under school regulations, members of staff reserve the right to search pupils' lockers.

7.2 The Owner's name should be written on all books, files, bags and items of clothing - preferably in more than one place.

7.3 Pupils are reminded that they are responsible for their money and other valuables at all times. These should not be left in the pockets of coats hanging in the cloakroom. Items are left in lockers at the owner's risk.

7.4 Particularly valuable items should not be brought to school unless it is essential to do so. In that event, they should be left in the School Office for safe-keeping.

7.5 Musical instruments must be left in designated Music Department storage rooms.

7.6 Mobile Electronic Devices (MEDs), including phones, headphones/pods, may only be used before the start of school, (8.30am) after school, and in a class or other area where specific permission is given by supervising staff or officially authorised.

7.7 Mobile Electronic Devices (MEDs) must not, under any circumstances, be used to take **photographs/videos** in school without the permission of supervising staff.

7.8 If Mobile Electronic Devices are brought to school they **must be switched off , and not accessible during lessons or when doing internal examinations.** Inappropriate use of such equipment will result in disciplinary action. If such equipment is operated inappropriately it may be confiscated and then collected from the School Office at the end of the school day. MEDs are not permitted in external examinations under any circumstances. Inappropriate use of such equipment will result in disciplinary action, which will be escalated as necessary.

7.9 If mobile phones have to be brought to school, they should be kept in your inside pocket, side pocket or school bag. They must not be carried in the breast pocket of blazers.

7.10 During study time, where permission is given by supervising staff, pupils may listen to



music, provided it cannot be heard by others. Devices must not be used for non-study related activities, e.g. gaming or communication.

7.11 During Games, P.E. and co-curricular activities valuables should not be left in the changing room but placed as directed by the supervising Member of Staff.

7.12 All pupils are expected to treat others with courtesy and respect, therefore inappropriate use of mobile technology towards other individuals, whilst in school or on the way to or from school, will be subject to disciplinary action.

7.13 Pupils should report loss of property to staff immediately.

7.14 Where pupils have a pastoral concern during the course of the school day, they should, in the first instance, report this to a member of staff.

## **8. Biometric System**

8.1 Pupils should only use the system to purchase food for themselves in the Dining Hall / Sixth Form Centre.

8.2 Use of other pupils' pin codes is strictly forbidden.

8.3 Pupils should ensure that they have sufficient money on their system account before attempting to purchase food in the Dining Hall / Sixth Form Centre.

8.4 Pupils exceeding the limit on their account will have their name taken by the till operator and this will be passed to the Head of Year.

8.5 Pupils exceeding the limit on the account must place funds in their account before attempting to make further purchases.

8.6 Pupils exceeding the limit on their account, on more than one occasion, will be reported to their Head of Year and subject to sanction on subsequent occasions. Parents will be informed.

## **9. Care of the school environment**

9.1 Liquid white erasers should not be brought to school.

9.2 Chewing of gum is banned.

9.3 In the event of food or drink being spilled, pupils should report the matter to the duty teacher or the School Office in order that the spillage may be cleaned up.

9.4 All lunches should be eaten in the Dining Hall or Sixth Form Centre.

9.5 All rubbish should be placed in the bins which are provided.

9.6 Pupils are expected to show due respect for all property whether school, belonging to others, or their own.

## **10. Behaviour**

10.1 The Pupil Code of Conduct details expected behaviour and, as such, is an important component of Pupil Regulations.

10.2 Disciplinary sanctions will be employed in respect of pupils who are reported for misbehaviour in school, on the way to or from school, or during participation in Academy out-of-school activities.

The school reserves the right to employ the following disciplinary sanctions in response to breach of the Pupil Regulations and/or Code of Conduct:- verbal admonition, written imposition, break/lunch-time/after-school/Saturday/Closure

Day' detention(s) (which will normally include completion of appropriate tasks), withdrawal from class, suspension and expulsion.

Regulations are kept under continual review and are therefore subject to change in order to ensure the welfare of all. It is expected that pupils will exercise goodwill in the interpretation of these regulations.

May, 2025



# POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY

## 1. Introduction

Positive behaviour is a fundamental condition for the effective realisation of the school aims and objectives. The establishment of good standards of behaviour is a whole-school matter – a corporate responsibility of all staff and pupils in partnership with parents. It keeps pupils safe, contributing to the caring environment in which pupils can develop towards reaching their full potential and supports staff in their roles of helping pupils to this end. In this school we seek to promote and encourage good behaviour and co-operation, based on positive relationships and respect, and preventative approaches, rather than exclusively applying sanctions and administering punishment. The provisions of this policy apply to pupils whilst on their way to and from school, wearing school uniform or engaged in any activity organised by the school, on or off site. The policy also enables fair and consistent treatment of all pupils of the school. The policy sits within the wider Pastoral Care context, which is central to Ballymena Academy's ethos of care for the individual.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Framework, the Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005 (SENDO) and Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2016) require that “reasonable adjustments” are made to all policies, procedures and practices to ensure that a disabled person is not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to those who are not disabled. Thus, as well as applying appropriate sanctions/interventions, the school will also implement strategies aimed at alleviating the behavioural difficulty.

At all stages, the welfare of individual pupils and the wider school community is considered paramount. Every effort will be made to support pupils in developing habits of positive behaviour. A non-exhaustive list of rewards for recognition of positive behaviour includes: verbal praise from staff, selection to positions of responsibility, recognition in assemblies, photographic displays, celebratory events and formal presentations in assemblies or Prize Day.

Respect is at the core of all aspects of school life and we seek to instil this core principle with each of our pupils: Respect for others, property, environment and self.

## 2. Aim

To promote a positive learning environment for the whole school community which fosters mutual respect and which is

- happy and caring;
- safe and secure;
- pleasant to live and work in;

- Conducive to effective learning and teaching;
- conducive to personal and social development, including the acquisition and maintenance of self-esteem and self-discipline, and an increasing acceptance of responsibility as preparation for adult life;
- focused on preventing bullying and dealing effectively with reported incidents;
- encouraging the development of positive attitudes towards others, including tolerance, respect and good manners.

### **3. Responsibilities of Pupils**

3.1 Pupils are expected to be wholly co-operative and well-mannered, and also to show respect for themselves, others and the school, as outlined in the Code of Conduct. Pupils are encouraged to self-regulate their behaviour out of respect for others. A non-exhaustive list of examples of excellent behaviour might be: willingly helping staff and fellow pupils; full application in class or co-curricular activity; handing in valuables; reporting a concern about inappropriate actions by other pupils; participation in school organised activities and active support for charitable work.

3.2 Pupils are required to abide by the Pupil Regulations and the Code of Conduct, copies of which are issued to parents and available within pupil Learning Organisers.

3.3 Pupils in Years 13 and 14 are also required to abide by the terms of the Sixth Form Agreement.

### **4. Responsibilities of Teaching Staff**

**Reaction** is a prominent feature of discipline. However, success in achieving the aim outlined above depends on appropriate **proaction** and it is important to keep this to the fore. Reaction is also a feature of an approach to positive behaviour management ensuring excellent standards of discipline.

Teaching Staff are expected to -

4.1 Create and maintain a positive and effective learning atmosphere and ensure that the Teaching and Learning policy is followed.

4.2 Treat pupils with courtesy and respect, showing interest and enthusiasm, listening and valuing their contributions and views.

4.3 Set an appropriate example to pupils in all areas of school life and in such matters as

- preparation and organisation;
- regular marking of work and effective time-keeping;
- interpersonal relationships - being polite and considerate, refraining from sarcasm and belittling, being fair and consistent, praising more than blaming;
- classroom management - expecting and maintaining high standards;
- showing respect for themselves, pupils and staff (teaching and non-teaching)

4.4 Be sympathetic, approachable and alert to difficulties which pupils may be facing.

4.5 State clearly the boundaries of positive behaviour and respond promptly and firmly to

pupils who test these boundaries.

4.6 Expect high standards and acknowledge effort and achievement.

4.7 Ensure consistent, fair and firm application of the Pupil Regulations, the Code of Conduct, the Sixth Form Agreement and the Addressing Bullying Policy.

4.8 Foster personal, social and academic development of pupils.

All members of staff have a role to play in trying to ensure that every pupil

- experiences some measure of success;
- has the opportunity to shoulder some responsibility.

Such experiences promote the development of self-esteem and self-discipline.

4.9 Maintain effective communication with parents, in line with the school's agreed procedures.

4.10 Make appropriate intervention, whenever and wherever pupil misbehaviour is witnessed.

Members of staff are expected to maintain pupil discipline both inside and outside the classroom. Disruptive and disorderly behaviour in school will not be permitted. Inappropriate behaviours should be challenged and/or reported to the Head of Department (HOD)/Head of Year (HOY)/Vice-Principal/Principal according to the nature and seriousness of the offence and following the positive behaviour procedures.

4.11 Be aware of bullying as a serious issue and implement the Addressing Bullying Policy. (See Addressing Bullying Policy.)

## **5. Responsibilities of Senior Leadership Team (SLT)**

SLT should provide support for staff in implementing this policy and in promoting home-school links.

## **6. Responsibilities of Parents**

This school welcomes parents' interest and involvement and encourages them to express their reasonable concerns about their child. Such concerns are taken seriously and are handled with tact and sensitivity.

6.1 Ensure their child attends school regularly, arriving punctually with their homework complete and organised for the day ahead.

6.2 Acknowledge the school's policies, including the Pupil Regulations, the Code of Conduct and the Sixth Form Agreement, and indicate support for them when they accept their child's placement in Ballymena Academy.

6.3 Inform the school, usually through the HOY, where there are changes in their child's health or family circumstances or if situations arise which may impact on their child's well-being or behaviour.

6.4 Support their child's self-discipline through their own example, by their encouragement of good behaviour and by reinforcing measures taken by the school.

## **7. Responsibilities of the Board of Governors**

The Board of Governors -

7.1 Formulates and adopts this and related policies, and takes responsibility for reviewing

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and amending them as required.

7.2 Discusses, with the Principal, issues related to serious breaches of school discipline and discharges its responsibilities identified in the school's Scheme for the Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils.

## **8. Procedures for dealing with breaches of school discipline**

8.1 In school, as in the family, prevention is better than punishment and admonition or reprimand is often both adequate and successful. However, for more serious or repeated misbehaviour, a graded series of sanctions is available according to the context of the offence. Interventions should be fair and appropriate. Their application should be prompt, consistent, aimed at defusing the situation and reaching a constructive resolution. A range of accompanying interventions will help to reduce the likelihood of the concern being repeated and support positive behaviour decisions by the pupil.

8.2 Interventions available to Class Teachers, HODs and HOYs are detailed and made available for Staff.

8.3 Very serious offences or repeated misbehaviour will be brought to the attention of the Vice-Principal in charge of behaviour and/or the Principal. The Principal may, after discussion with the parents and consultation with senior colleagues, initiate the suspension/expulsion procedure in accordance with the Scheme for the Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils. Following suspension, the pupil's return to school will be permitted on the understanding that a further serious breach of regulations could, at the discretion of the Board of Governors, result in the expulsion of the pupil from Ballymena Academy. Use may be made of a written contract.

8.4 It should be noted that, according to the seriousness of the breach of discipline, the Principal, acting on behalf of the Board of Governors, may initiate the suspension/expulsion procedure at any stage.

## **9. Policy Review**

This policy will be kept under review.

In implementing this Positive Behaviour Policy, the Board of Governors has the power of suspension/expulsion for serious breaches of discipline which may occur as identified in the Scheme for the Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils:

- at any time, on or off site, whilst the pupil is engaged in an activity organised under the aegis of Ballymena Academy
- on the way to or from school
- at any time, on or off site, as a consequence of a pupil behaving in an aggressive or intimidating manner towards a member of staff or the property of a member of staff.

●  
In dealing with such serious breaches of discipline suspension/expulsion procedures as identified in the Scheme for the Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils may be applied whether or not the pupil was wearing uniform at the time and without awaiting the outcome of any criminal or civil proceedings.



## CAREERS EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE

Ballymena Academy gives full recognition to the importance of Careers Education and Guidance as part of the general personal development of the pupil.

An integrated programme of Careers Education and Guidance aims to develop knowledge, skills and personal qualities which will enable pupils to manage their career development effectively - making informed choices at transition points - formulating and implementing personal career plans.

All pupils, throughout the key stages, follow a structured time-tabled programme of Careers Education taught by a team of Careers teachers. Using a variety of strategies and resources pupils are given an opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding of themselves; the world in which they live; the employment and career opportunities that are available so that they can effectively manage transition from school to adult life; further and higher education, employment and training.

Formal careers guidance interviews are an important component of the school's careers programme. All pupils at 'transition points' i.e. Years 10, 12 and 14, have the opportunities to benefit from careers interviews which are conducted in school by their careers teacher, and/or the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) Careers Adviser. They are impartial, carefully planned and include advice focused on the career needs of individual pupils. Careers teachers and the Careers Adviser are available throughout the year for consultation.

Personal Career Planning is very much a central part of the school's Careers Education and Guidance Programme. This is a continuing and evolving process - introduced in Year 10 - involving documented self-awareness, decision-making, planning and research pertinent to the pupil's individual needs.

Many subjects have the potential to make valuable contributions to each pupil's general vocational development and emerging occupational interests. The cross-curricular components of careers which flow naturally and realistically from the content and methodology of each subject help pupils to appreciate the coherence of their total curriculum.

As an integral part of their Careers programme, pupils have ready access to a comprehensive range of careers information, including interactive computer programs and databases, on-line Internet Careers resources (Unifrog), catalogues, books and pamphlets. It is held in a purpose-built careers suite comprising four interview rooms and a well-stocked careers library.

The careers programme is enhanced by purposeful links developed with staff from Further and Higher Education, the Department of Employment and Learning and employers. The Careers Adviser normally visits the school one day per week to conduct guidance interviews and contribute to careers lessons.

Careers information is supplemented by a careers convention and by visiting speakers from further and higher education (DEL) and occupations which reflect a full range of career interests of the pupils.

Pupils in Year 13 have the opportunity to spend time work shadowing which informs their decision-making in relation to their general vocational and specific occupational interests.

Throughout the Sixth Form pupils attend university and college open days.

In Year 10 parents are invited to an information evening and interviews about the options available for GCSE. In August, after the publication of GCSE results, Year 12 pupils and their parents are invited to discuss post-GCSE options with a careers teacher. A series of talks on Higher and Further Education informs parents of pupils in Year 13 about UCAS, CAO and other matters relating to tertiary education. Other opportunities to meet with careers teachers and the careers officer arise during Parents' Evenings and the Careers Convention.

The full policy document is available from the school.

# GAMES PROVISION

## Aim

In promoting and developing skills, fitness and enthusiastic participation, the school aims to develop excellence in a wide variety of sporting activities.

Thanks to the commitment, enthusiasm and expertise of the teaching staff, and indeed a number of involved parents and former pupils, the school is able to offer a wide and varied selection of sporting activities.

As part of the Curriculum throughout the school, physical education and general fitness are encouraged through allocated P.E. and Games periods.

P.E. and Games develop fitness, overall co-ordination, perception and strategic awareness along with personal and social skills. The interests and needs of pupils are accommodated through a wide range of activities - indoor, outdoor, individual, team, competitive or purely recreational - each offering the opportunity for pupils to fulfil their potential. Although traditionally the major sports in Ballymena Academy have been hockey and rugby, ample opportunity is available to participate in and explore many other activities including Aerobics, Athletics (track or field), Badminton, Chess, Cricket, Cross-Country, Conditioning, Dance, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Golf, Gymnastics, Netball, Showjumping, Soccer, Swimming, Table Tennis and Tennis.

Pupils are encouraged to develop a sense of loyalty and commitment to the school and those selected to represent the school, whether as individuals or as members of a team, are expected to make themselves available for training and matches, including those played on Saturdays.

## On-site facilities

Ballymena Academy's own on-site facilities include two gymnasias, one conditioning suite, one outside gym, a Minor Hall, two astro hockey pitches, one all-weather athletics track, one grass football pitch, six rugby pitches, two cricket squares, five astro tennis courts and three outside netball/basketball courts.

## Off-site facilities

Pupils have opportunities to enhance their games skills not only in school but also at the Leisure Centre, Ballymena Rugby Club, Ballymena Ladies' Hockey Club, Ballymena and



## DRUGS EDUCATION: SUMMARY

Ballymena Academy recognises that the care, welfare and protection of all pupils is of central importance.

Curricular material is delivered as part of the Personal Social and Health Education programme (KS3) or Personal Development programme (KS4) or through the Sixth Form Enrichment Programme and enables pupils to make informed judgements and choices.

Above all, Ballymena Academy seeks to create a supportive and caring school environment through which confident and fulfilled pupils are unlikely to be tempted into drug misuse in wider society.

### **Aspects of drug education programme**

Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the use, misuse, effects and risks of drugs and other potentially harmful substances. Legal implications are also considered.

Pupils' social skills are enhanced so that they may counter and resist those attempting to embroil them in drug-related activities.

Moreover, the school's Drugs Education Co-ordinator ensures that the teaching staff are fully conversant with initiatives and materials emanating from the Police Service, voluntary and statutory agencies.

## **Drugs Education Policy Document**

The Drugs Education Co-ordinator will be pleased to explain to parents full details of the school's policies on the management of prescribed medicines in school; procedures related to the safe management of solvents in schools; procedures and personnel pertinent to an emergency drugs-related situation; procedures and sanctions specific to suspected drug misuse; obligations and procedures concerning possession or dealing of drugs on school premises.

These procedures are included in the overall Drugs Education Policy Document which is available to parents on request.

## **Inculcating Positive Attitudes and Behaviour**

Those parents who wish to consult the main Drugs Education Policy Document will be reassured that Ballymena Academy seeks to inculcate attitudes and reinforce behaviours which will deter drug experimentation and abuse.

## OTHER POLICY DOCUMENTS

The school has over 30 policy documents relating to a wide variety of aspects of school life including Safeguarding, Special Educational Needs, RSE and Mobile Electronic Devices. Copies of individual policies are available on request.



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