

What is Bullying?

“Bullying behaviour is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the victim to defend him or herself.” (DE, 1999)

Bullying behaviour is complex in nature and can be categorised into a number of forms.

- **Verbal** – e.g. name-calling, threatening text messages.
- **Non-verbal** – e.g. menacing looks
- **Physical** – e.g. hitting, kicking
- **Exclusion** – e.g. being left out
- **Extortion** – e.g. taking money or property such as mobile phone

Bullying is a problem for a large number of children. During the three months *Childline* operated its bullying line, it logged 7,600 calls. Research has shown that about 1 in 8 children are directly involved in bullying either as bullies or victims. The results are distressing. Victims report the effects – loss of sleep, loss of appetite, inability to concentrate, living in fear of going to school and, in extreme cases, suicide. Other outcomes can be physical injury and under-achievement at school. For bullies, one consequence can be to learn that aggressive behaviour helps them get their own way. Thus successful bullying can contribute to anti-social behaviour in later life.

Forms of bullying behaviour

A survey carried out with Year 9 pupils in 60 post-primary schools throughout Northern Ireland revealed the most common types of bullying experienced.

	Boys	Girls
Frequently or occasionally being called mean names, made fun or teased in a hurtful way	25.4%	16.3%
Frequently or occasionally being left out of things on purpose, excluded from a group of friends or completely ignored	10.1%	10.4%
Other students frequently or occasionally tell lies, spread false rumours or try to make others dislike me	15.4%	12.8%

This leaflet is for the families of children and young people who are involved in bullying whether as victims or bullies.

It is for families worried that their young people may become involved in bullying.

It is for everyone who wants to help keep our college free from bullying.

Bullying cannot be stopped by parents, students or teachers acting alone.

The advice below is therefore the most important thing in this booklet.

- If someone in your family is being bullied – you must tell a teacher.
- If you are worried that someone in your family may be bullied – speak to a teacher.
- If you want to help rid our college of bullying – work with the teachers.

Stopping Bullying

Bullying is not easy to define. Sometimes it involves hitting or kicking. However, threats, teasing and taunting are more common and can be more damaging.

Children who are being bullied feel powerless to stop it happening. They may be angry, frightened or bewildered. The families of these children are often angry and frustrated on their behalf.

All of these emotions are natural and parents have a right to feel angry if their children are bullied at school. But to deal effectively with the problem, these feelings need to be channelled into positive action.

Of course bullies must expect some sanction to be imposed but punishment alone will not solve the problem.

Parents, teachers and students must be prepared to talk so that everybody understands how others feel.

Contacting the College

If you or someone in your family is being bullied you must contact the college.

The best person to speak to is someone you already know and trust. Our college will make sure that there is always someone available, during term time, to answer urgent enquiries.

Victims

Anybody can become the victim of bullying. All it takes is to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Bullies

Experts say there are two reasons why people bully others. One is because they enjoy the feeling of power it gives them. The second is because members of a group can feel closer to each other by picking on an ‘outsider’.

Parents

The victims of school bullying need the support of their families, teachers and their friends. Grandparents and other adults in the family are often keen to listen and to try to help. Any advice children are given must be appropriate. Telling a bullied child to hit back rarely works and repeated taunts cannot simply be ignored.

Children hide the fact that they are being bullied from their parents because they are frightened of what the bullies will do if they tell.

Listen to your child. Trust your child. But bear in mind that he or she may not have told you the full story.

Sisters, Brothers and Friends

Brothers, sisters and friends often know that someone is being bullied long before teachers and parents do. Sometimes the bullied person asks them not to do anything. Sometimes they do nothing in case the bullies start to pick on *them*. But doing nothing usually means that the bullying carries on, or that the bullies become more confident and choose more victims. Part of the fun that bullies get comes from the reaction of bystanders. If you do nothing the bullies may think that you approve of what they are doing.

Here are some things you can do. If any of them do not work, don't give up. Try something else.

- Persuade the person who is being bullied to tell a teacher.
- Persuade the person who is being bullied to tell a parent.
- Encourage your sister, brother, friend to talk to you about what is happening.
- Offer to speak to an adult on the bullied person's behalf
- Let the bullies know that you are not frightened of them and that you are determined to see that they stop.
- Raise the issue of bullying with the Student Council.

Here are some things you should not do.

- Do not use violence against the bullies – you might end up being accused of bullying yourself.
- Do not tell your sister, brother or friend that they should deal with the problem on their own – if that was possible they wouldn't be asking you for help.
- Do not try to deal with things on your own.
- Do not ask someone else to use violence on your behalf to deal with the bully.
- Do not keep the problem to yourself.

Involve as many people as possible. In particular make sure that teachers know what is going on – but, most of all, talk to someone.

Dealing with Bullying

The parents of the victims of bullying often become very angry when schools seem not to punish bullies. Punishment may help to deter bullying and it can be a clear signal of our college's disapproval of this type of behaviour. However, we use a range of other methods of dealing with bullying.

Before bullies can be punished there must be a clear case against them. Establishing the facts can take too long for the parents of the victim. It may not even be possible. Meanwhile the bullying continues. Our college's priority is to stop bullying at an early stage, not to wait until it has become serious enough for the bullies to be punished.

Whether your child is being bullied or is bullying others, try to remember that bullies may need help, as well as a sanction. They may need help to come to terms with personal problems or to understand the effect of their actions. Members of a bullying gang may feel little sense of guilt if they feel that all they have done is call someone names in fun.

The key to stopping bullying is getting those involved to talk about what is happening. The teachers may well decide that it is a good idea to get the parents, as well as the children, together. But this will only do any good if there is a calm atmosphere and a common desire to bring an end to bullying.

Please be patient with us. We are trying to help. Bullying is a difficult problem which is not always easy to solve.

The Golden Rules for Students

1. **Tell** someone in college. You can tell any teacher, your Form Tutor or Year Head.
2. **Do it right away** – don't let the situation go on and on.
3. **Note down what has happened** – write down the names of witnesses in case the person who is bullying denies it.

4. **Stand up for yourself** – if you can, let them know that their behaviour is wrong.
5. **Never get into a situation where a fight will start** – walk away. Tell a teacher. Before college begins, at break or lunch time and after school there are always teachers on duty.

The college has an Anti-Bullying Policy, a copy of which can be obtained by contacting the college office on (028) 87724401.

Mrs Claire Venon (Acting Vice-Principal) is Head of Pastoral Care at the college and may be contacted regarding any bullying matter.

“Banish the Bully Box”

There is a 'Bully Box' in the front foyer of our college where concerns about any student may be posted. Please give names, where possible, as anonymous referrals can be very difficult to act upon.

Remember: ICD does NOT tolerate bullying. Always tell – things will get better.

Organisations Offering Advice

- **Anti-Bullying Campaign.** ABC offers help, support and advice to parents and children, victims and bullies. ABC will also refer people to other organisations who can help. Tel: 071 378 1446 (9.30am – 5pm)
- **Childline.** Free 24 hour helpline offering confidential counselling to children and young people in trouble or danger. Tel: 0800 111. Or write to Freepost 1111, Glasgow, G1 8BR or Freepost 1111, London N1 0BR.

- **Children's Legal Centre** 20 Compton Terrace, London N1 2UN. Advice line Tel: 071 359 6251 (2-5pm). General enquiries: 071 359 9392 (10 – 1pm; 2 – 5 pm).
- **Kidscape** 152 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 9TR. Bullying counsellor available on Monday and Wednesday only. Tel: 071 730 3300.
- **Parentline** Westbury House, 57 Hart Road Thundersley, Essex SS7 3PD. National Office Tel: 0268 757077. Parentline groups are run by trained volunteer parents who want to help other parents. Local groups exist throughout England. Parents should consult their local telephone directory. There are also groups in Dublin and Belfast.

Integrated College Dungannon



Bully-Free Zone

Key Contacts

Mrs Claire Venon – Acting Vice-Principal (Head of Pastoral Care)

Mr Andrew Sleeth – Acting Principal

Mr D Clarke – Senior Teacher

Mrs E Seale – Head of Year 8

Mrs Y Beggs – Head of Year 9

Miss L Burke – Head of Year 10

Miss N McManus – Acting Head of Year 11

Miss C Butcher – Acting Head of Year 12

Mr C Holmes – Head of Sixth Form

Integrated College Dungannon

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A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS