



# Ashfield Girls' High School



## Eating Disorders Policy



**Policy For The Support of Pupils Suffering From an Eating Disorder**

**Each Different, Each Talented, All Valued.**

## **Content**

**School Mission Statement**

**School Aims**

**Aim of the policy**

**What is an eating disorder?**

**Ashfield Girls' High School- How we aim to support pupils with eating disorders.**

**Pupil Confidentiality**

**Important Overview**

## **School Mission Statement**

**Ashfield Girls' High School aspires to help all members of the school community to improve the quality of their lives through learning, living, caring and the need to leave our mark on the world in which we live.**

## **Aims**

The aim of the school is to provide each student with a secure and supportive learning environment for a programme of education which meets her individual needs and which brings them success and fulfilment in their school life and prepares them for life beyond school.

### **At Ashfield Girls' High School, we promote and value:**

- A thirst for learning
- Equality
- Intellectual, spiritual and moral values
- Honesty, integrity and respect for others
- Self-discipline, self-esteem and self-confidence
- Personal responsibility
- A positive attitude
- A healthy lifestyle
- Support of parents and the community
- Our committed and hard-working staff and pupils

## **The School Ethos**

**“Each Different, Each Talented, All Valued”**

## **Aim of the Policy**

The policy aims to:

- Raise awareness about eating disorders
- Help staff to recognise symptoms and potential problems early
- Demonstrate how our school will support pupils affected by eating disorders and their parents/carers
- Outline procedures school will follow to ensure the protection of pupils and their information
- Offer tools for support and prevention

## What is an Eating Disorder?

Boys, girls, men and women from all types of background and ethnic groups can suffer from eating disorders. Eating disorders are a way of coping with feelings that are making the person unhappy or depressed. It may be difficult to face up to and talk about. The pupil may experience a range of emotions e.g. feelings like anger, sadness, guilt, loss or fear. An eating disorder is a sign that the pupil needs help in coping with life, and dealing with personal problems.

Here are some of the symptoms:

<b>Physical signs</b>	<b>Behavioural signs</b>	<b>Psychological signs</b>
<b>Anorexia Nervosa</b>	<b>Anorexia Nervosa</b>	<b>Anorexia Nervosa</b>
Severe weight loss Periods stopping (Amenorrhoea) Hormonal changes in men and boys Difficulty sleeping Dizziness Stomach pains Constipation Poor circulation & feeling cold Downy hair on body	Wanting to be left alone Wearing big baggy clothes Excessive exercising Lying about eating meals Denying there is a problem Difficulty concentrating Wanting to have control	Wanting to be left alone Wearing big baggy clothes Excessive exercising Lying about eating meals Denying there is a problem Difficulty concentrating Wanting to have control
<b>Bulimia Nervosa</b>	<b>Bulimia Nervosa</b>	<b>Bulimia Nervosa</b>
Sore throat / swollen glands Stomach pains Mouth infections Irregular periods Dry or poor skin Difficulty sleeping Sensitive or damaged teeth	Eating large quantities of food Being sick after eating Being secretive	Feeling ashamed, depressed and guilty Feeling out of control Mood Swings
<b>Binge Eating</b>	<b>Binge Eating</b>	<b>Binge Eating</b>
Weight gain	Eating large quantities of food Eating inappropriate food Being secretive	Feeling depressed and out of control Mood swings

Conditions as complex as eating disorders mean that there are variations in the typical signs, and not all symptoms will apply to all people. Some pupils may feel that they have a mixture of anorexia and bulimia, or alternate between them. Some pupils also find they are affected by an urge to harm themselves or abuse alcohol or drugs.

Eating Disorders do not include food allergies, selective eating issues or disorders of the digestive system. However, a G.P should be the first point of call for these issues as well as for eating disorders.



### **Ashfield Girls' High School- How we aim to support pupils with eating disorders.**

Ashfield Girls' High School recognises that eating disorders are a way of coping with feelings that are making the person unhappy or depressed.

Early intervention and professional help are essential. (Always refer to the school Pastoral Care Policy)

- **The child's welfare must be paramount,**
- **The child's interests must always come first,**
- **All agencies concerned with the protection of children must work together in the best interests of the children,**
- **Confidentiality must be subordinate to the need to protect the interest of the child.**

The core team of Heads of Progress, Head of Junior School, Head of Pastoral Care, and Principal are available for consultation and support.

Personal Development, Social, Health and Citizenship Education play an important role in delivering issues around healthy lifestyles and emotional literacy.

The Eating Disorders Association states that, "experience shows that support from school, friends and family can really help young people to recover even when they are receiving professional help and advice. **However, it's important to remember that anyone with an eating disorder must get proper medical advice and help.**"

A link to the EATING DISORDERS ASSOCIATION website will be visible on the school website – **[www.edauk.com](http://www.edauk.com)**

## **Pupil Confidentiality**

### **How do you know if a pupil is at risk?**

There are no guidelines available on how to judge the level of risk a student may be facing. Staff must exercise their best judgement when making such decisions about a pupil.

### **Pupil Confidentiality**

Staff have a duty not to give out information about pupils to anyone, except in exceptional circumstances. These exceptional circumstances are when the staff member feels the health, safety or welfare of the student or others is at risk. Due to this staff should always inform pupils that they could never agree to absolute confidentiality

### **What do you do if you think a pupil is at risk?**

Encourage the pupil to agree to inform her parents through yourself and the Head of Progress. A parent interview should be arranged immediately with the pupil, teacher, Head of Progress and Parent/Carer.

If the pupil concerned refuses to inform her parents then the member of staff must immediately inform the Designated Teacher (Miss J Friar) or a Deputy Designated Teacher (Mrs N Christie or Mrs B Cripps). Try to inform the student of the action you are taking as a sign of respect, support and to avoid conflict.

The Designated Teacher will make a formal decision about whether or not the student concerned is at risk. If the Designated Teacher decides the pupil is at grave risk they have the right to inform the relevant parties of the situation in order to get the pupil the help they need.

## **IMPORTANT OVERVIEW**

**Where a pupil has already been diagnosed with an eating disorder, her confidentiality will be respected and staff will only be informed on a “Need to Know” basis. For this reason it is essential that staff are consistent in delivering the caring ethos of our school in their interactions with all pupils.**



# Challenging girls today; creating women of value in the future



A Specialist School for **ICT**



Acting Principal: Mr Paul McClintock BSc DipScEd PGCE

Hollywood Road, Belfast  
BT4 2LY

Tel: 028 9047 1744  
Fax: 028 9067 2416

[www.ashfieldgirls.org](http://www.ashfieldgirls.org)  
[info@ashgirls.belfast.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@ashgirls.belfast.ni.sch.uk)