



Anti-Bullying Policy

2024-2025

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Dowdales School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

Introduction

This policy, which incorporates a set of procedures, makes clear the school's commitment to be known amongst the students and the community as an Anti-Bullying School. We recognise that bullying exists within our society, and that its consequences can sometimes be traumatic for the individuals and family's concern.

Aims

Dowdales School is an inclusive community which believes in establishing and maintaining a positive learning environment where everyone has the right to feel safe, enjoy their learning, achieve to the best of their ability and be treated with respect. Everyone has a responsibility for their own behaviour, to safeguard the rights of other people and to treat others with respect, dignity and consideration. Our anti-bullying policy underpins the rights and responsibilities which are at the core of our beliefs as a school. Bullying, intimidation and harassment of any member of our community are examples of unacceptable behaviour and as such reference is made to the Behaviour management policy and safeguarding policy. Staff record incidents and set sanctions for all forms of bullying as they do for all other negative behaviours onto SIM's. The School will take measures to prevent all forms of bullying during school time and during off-site activities including online safety.

- To raise awareness of bullying and create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidences of bullying behaviour.
- To bring about conditions in which bullying is less likely to happen in the future.
- To ensure bullying is prevented in so far as reasonably practical
- To clarify the reporting processes.
- To prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.
- To react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way.
- To safeguard the pupil who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support for the pupil.
- To provide support for the perpetrator whilst developing strategies to enable perpetrators to be accountable for their behaviour.

Our Definition of bullying

A deliberate attempt, often repeated, to hurt or humiliate someone (or group) either physically, verbally or emotionally.

- Hurtful (physical, verbal, emotional)
- Repeated (Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over an extended period of time)
- Intentional (The perpetrator means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental)



Procedures

The school procedures promote personal responsibility and informed decision making with all students. We understand that students can be witness to incident of bullying and that relationships can become strained as a natural experience of growing up. We have procedures in place to regulate the conduct of students and promote that all actions are a choice. We educate students on the risks and effects of bullying, both from the perspective of the victim and perpetrator. We believe in a strong relationships with parents and carers and we expect the school's decision to be given full parental support. Some forms of bullying are illegal and should be reported to the police. These include violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation for example name calling, threats and abusive phone calls, emails or text messages and hate crimes. Where school staff feel that an offence may have been committed, they will seek assistance from the police.

Prevention

Our daily language and actions are centred around the principle of mutual respect and tolerance. We seek to prevent issues of bullying arising by educating students and staff on the risks associated with bullying.

- Regular evaluations of our anti-bullying approach to ensure advances in technology are also included.
- Education on how to stay safe online
- No mobile phones are permitted during school time
- Regular consideration of student voice to check their understanding of their role to ensure bullying is reported, addressed and never accepted.
- Consistent implementation of PSHCE programme addressing issues relating to British values and Bullying
- An annual focus on Anti-Bullying week and linked Year assemblies educating students on bullying issues.
- Clear, simple and discreet methods of reporting any bullying issues or concerns to members of staff or via the 'confide' on the schools IT system.
- Access to student services and adult supervised areas at all times of the day including before and after school should they feel insecure or anxious.
- Links with voluntary organisations, PCSO's and other youth-based support to enhance support and education around bullying.



Roles and Responsibilities

Staff

Staff are responsible for ensuring the policy and procedures are followed and fairly applied. Staff should role model the behaviour they wish students to follow, and therefore should themselves act in a professional manner towards students, without prejudice or discrimination, and in line with the Dowdales Staff Code of Conduct. Staff Responsibilities in the event of a bullying incident

- Know the relevant school policy and procedures
- Be observant and ask students what is happening to them and follow up with a student after an incident
- Be aware of the signs of changes in emotional wellbeing and mental health
- Deal with incidents according to the policies and report to the relevant member of the pastoral team or a Senior member of staff as required
- Complete appropriate records using SIM's
- Never let any incidence of bullying or use of derogatory/discriminatory language pass by unreported, whether on-site or during an off-site activity
- Participate in training in relation to anti-bullying and online safety training
- Participate in the delivery of PHSE/Citizenship and / or other personal development curricular activities calendared within the school setting.
- All members of staff are responsible for dealing with issues of bullying which they witness or that are reported to them by any student/parent/carer, seeking support from a member of the pastoral team or Senior Leader as required.

Students

Students are expected to take personal responsibility for their behaviour and the choices they make both inside and outside of school. All members of the school community should be treated with respect. This is shown by the way that we speak to each other and by being courteous, well-mannered and by showing regard for the feelings of others and difficulties they face. Discrimination will not be tolerated. Students are encouraged to support their peers and adopt the ethos of being an 'upstander'. Students should support the school's stance towards bullying, prejudice and harassment, reporting any witnessed or suspected incidents either verbally or through written communication with key staff members.

Parents and Carers

Parents and Carers will be expected, encouraged and supported to take responsibility for the behaviour of their child both inside and outside the school. The school will encourage parents to work in partnership with the school to assist it in maintaining high standards of desired behaviour and challenging bullying by their own child if it occurs.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher will be responsible for the implementation and day-to-day management of the policy and procedures. The Headteacher will ensure that effective measures are taken to support the aims and principles outlined in this policy.



The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for ensuring the Anti-Bullying Policy is effectively implemented at the school and that the principles stated above are reviewed regularly. They will support the school in maintaining a safe environment, free from any form of bullying. They will ensure that this policy has reasonable expectations and is non-discriminatory in line with the legal responsibilities of the Equality Act 2010. They will ensure that this is communicated to students and parents and that expectations are clear. Governors will support the school in maintaining high standards of desired behaviour of students and staff. Governors will oversee disciplinary panels and appeals.

Bias

The Governing Body, Headteacher and staff will ensure there is no variability in application of the policy and procedures on any grounds, particularly ethnic or national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexuality.

Identifying Bullying

Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Some students are more likely to be the target of bullying, examples include:

- Students with special educational needs or disabilities
- Students in care
- Students who are adopted
- Students for whom home circumstances are more difficult
- Students who are suffering with a health problem
- Students with caring responsibilities

Staff recognise that some students are more vulnerable than others. During inset and staff meetings vulnerable groups/individuals are identified. New/emerging information about specific students is shared with staff via a weekly bulletin which is compiled and distributed by the designated safeguarding lead. It is particularly important that all staff are sensitive to students who, because of their behaviour or circumstances may be more vulnerable. Dowdales School does not tolerate any form of bullying, harassment or intimidation.



Forms of bullying include:

- Physical: involving pushing, punching, hitting or kicking
- Verbal: involving name calling, teasing, taunting and threatening
- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, undermining
- Exclusion: involving the isolation of the victim by ignoring him or her or by excluding him or her from group activities, likely to be as a result of conflict within a friendship group
- Racist: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986
- Sexist: Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive comments or demands for sexually explicit images ("Youth produced sexual imagery" – may also be cyber)
- Homophobic: because of or focussing on the issue of sexuality or sexual preference
- Biphobic: because of or focussing on the issue of sexuality or sexual preference
- Transphobic: because of or focussing on the issue of gender identity or gender preference
- Cyber: all areas of the internet such as email, chat room misuse, mobile threats by text messaging, instant messaging and calls, misuse of associated technology
- Theft: taking other students property without their permission.
- Ableist: Bullying behaviour that focusses on another person's disability or support needs; this can include mocking the individual's disability or their needs, using derogatory words or slurs in relation to an individual's disability, or deliberately excluding an individual because of their disability.
- Prejudicial: Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics or experiences, e.g. religion or mental health issues.
- Relational: Bullying that primarily constitutes of excluding, isolating and ostracising someone – usually through verbal and emotional bullying.
- Socioeconomic: Bullying based on prejudices against the perceived social status of the victim, including, but not limited to, their economic status, their parents' occupations, their health or nutrition level, or the perceived "quality" of their clothing or belongings.

These definitions are important as there is a need to make a distinction between things that may cause a student distress during their time in school, and bullying. A friendship that has broken down for example, and led to insults being exchanged, though distressing would not be considered bullying as it was not deliberate nor repeated. There are occasions in school when a person is quite unaware of the hurt they have caused to a fellow student, as the target had kept their feelings to themselves. The definition outlined above must be sensitively and thoughtfully applied; a hasty classification helps neither the 'victim' nor the 'perpetrator'.

Bullying can cause serious psychological damage and even suicide. Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment, threatening behaviour and physical behaviour.



Parents and carers, staff and students need to be vigilant, looking out for the signs of bullying which may include:

- Changes to a person's usual routine
- Non-attendance or evidence of truancy
- Changes to personality / behaviours including being withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Directly or indirectly communicates risk to life e.g. Self-harm / Suicide
- Academic performance deteriorates
- 'Loses' possessions inexplicably
- Asks for extra money or starts stealing
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Starts bullying others
- Reduced emotional wellbeing, deteriorating mental health, feeling down etc.
- Concerns in relation to eating, either not eating or over-eating
- Isolated from peers – no apparent friendship group
- Nervous or jumpy demeanour

Bullying which occurs outside of school premises

Staff have the power to discipline students for misbehaving in the community "to such an extent as is reasonable" (Behaviour and discipline in schools, DfE 2016). The school's behaviour management policy allows the school to regulate students' behaviour where the students are not in school, e.g. in the immediate vicinity of the school, on the journey to and from school or when clearly identifiable as a member of the school. When using public transport or walking/cycling to or from school or accessing shops within the local community students are expected to behave appropriately at all times demonstrating respect for others. Whilst the use of mobile phones and other electronic devices is not prohibited in these settings, this policy extends to their use. The use of an electronic device to record or capture images of other students in school uniform or staff members is not permitted. The use of electronic devices to send threats, record aggressive behaviour or public humiliation will be treated as a serious breach of the schools behavior policy. Students may be outside school on school business including school trips and educational visits, college courses, sporting activities and work experience placements. In such circumstances, breaches of the behaviour policy will be dealt with as if they had taken place in school. For behaviour outside school, but not on school business, including through the use of the technologies such as mobile phones and the internet, the school may discipline a student with a sanction, including a suspension/exclusion decided upon by the Headteacher, if that behaviour compromises student safety and happiness at school. Whilst the school has the power to discipline students for bullying that occurs outside school, it can only impose a disciplinary sanction and implement that sanction on the school premises or when the student is under the lawful control of school staff, for instance on a school trip.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted on. The headteacher will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to staff, students or a member of the public, the police will always be informed. Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.



The school will support the police in their investigation of such offences and share any relevant evidence with them.

Cyberbullying

Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, this can occur in or outside school. Students are encouraged to save evidence of abuse via screen prints or saved messages and share these with school staff to aid any investigation. The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the Headteacher, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. Staff members should seek the consent of the student and or their parent/carer prior to examining any data stored on a mobile phone. If the student/parent or carer chooses to withhold consent thus restricting the schools capacity to prove/disprove an allegation of bullying it could be viewed that they are intentionally obstructing an investigation. If an electronic device that is prohibited by the school rules has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must give the device to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable. Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a child or an extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police. If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline.

Child and child abuse (known as peer on peer)

Children may be harmed by other children or young children. Staff may be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use anti-bullying procedures where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a student's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures. Staff will refer to the Schools Safeguarding Policy and act accordingly.

Harassment of staff

The harassment, abuse or intimidation of staff, on and off the premises, including via the use of technologies such as mobile phones and the internet, is considered a serious breach of the school's anti-bullying policy. The school will discipline a student who breaches the school anti-bullying policy in this way with a sanction, which may include an exclusion decided upon by the Headteacher.

Investigating bullying

An incident or suspicion of bullying is taken seriously and immediately addressed. The procedure for dealing with bullying is below, but given the nature of some incidents this is a flexible approach that may be adapted where necessary, depending on circumstances:

- Issues will be dealt with in a timely fashion including the collection of statements/evidence. This includes those individuals directly involved and any witnesses
- Parents and carers will be informed as necessary and they may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the problem
- We will involve them in making choices about how the matter may be resolved



- If necessary (and appropriate) the police and/or external agencies will be consulted e.g. for incidents involving indecent images or threats through social media
- A serious attempt will be made to help the bully change their behaviour with a clear actions identified. This may include pastoral monitoring, restorative justice, bespoke training e.g. anger management or professional intervention.
- Records are kept of all bullying incidents including prejudice related behaviour and name-calling. These are used for monitoring and actions purposes, especially identifying potential emerging trends that the school may need to address. This is logged through SIM's.
- A review/catch up meeting is held with students after a period of time to review the situation and ensure no further incidents have occurred.

Recording bullying

Bullying or prejudiced related incidents are recorded on SIM's, to identify a difference in types of behavioural incidents. Where there is further risk a member of staff may refer directly the pastoral lead/Senior leader and undertake a follow up record of their concern at a later time (within the same school day). All SIM's logs are reviewed by pastoral/safeguarding staff on a daily basis and a discussion can follow, allowing this to be a swift process. This ensures bullying, prejudice related behaviour and name-calling incidents can be investigated fairly and consistently. This is then added to the behaviour log of the perpetrator to keep a record should there be a repeat offence.

Supporting students experiencing bullying

All reports will be taken seriously and followed up by Form Teachers, Assistant Heads of School, Heads of School or Leadership Team.

All of the following procedures will be adopted as appropriate.

Students will be reassured that they do not deserve to be bullied and that this is not their fault.

- We will assure them that it was right to report this incident
- We will encourage them to talk about how they feel
- We will try to ascertain the extent of the problem
- We will engage them in making choices about how the matter may be resolved
- We will try to ensure that they feel safe
- We will discuss strategies for being safe and staying safe
- We will ask them to report immediately any further incidents to us
- We will explain strategies for blocking/deleting messages or people online.



- We will affirm that bullying can be stopped and that our school will persist with intervention until it does
- We will inform parent(s)/carer(s)
- We will keep records of incidents that we become aware of and how we respond to them
- We will follow up after incidents to check that the bullying has not started again
- We will deal with students who are bullying in an appropriate way
- We will also work with students who have been involved in bullying others to ascertain the sort of support that they themselves need
- We may involve their friends/older students in peer support/a buddying scheme/mediation

Sanctions

Following investigation into a report of bullying we ensure that incidents are met with an appropriate level of sanction. This may include:

- Contact with parents
- Pastoral monitoring & use of monitoring report
- Behaviour contract with student, parents and school
- Pastoral Support Plan
- Restorative meeting/justice
- Meeting with parents
- Bespoke training (self-regulation/anger management)
- Behaviour management plan
- Professional intervention (police)
- Restorative practises

More serious incidents

The anti-bullying policy outlines a range of sanctions that can be applied. Using a stepped system of recording incidents, we ensure that incidents are met with an appropriate level of sanction. For more serious breaches of discipline, the decision regarding which sanction to impose will take into account a number of factors, including the nature of the incident, a student's age and any special educational needs or disability they may have, as well as the individual student's behaviour record. Where a student has shown a pattern of repeated bullying the level of sanction may increase. In some cases the school will use its ultimate sanction, to suspend, where the Headteacher considers this appropriate.

Sanctions may include but are not limited to the following



- Changes to timetable (curriculum lessons/form group)
- Withdrawal of break and or lunchtime privileges
- Withholding participation in school events that are not an essential part of the curriculum
- Enhanced supervision during unstructured time (break/lunch time)
- Amended start and finish times
- Amended transport arrangements to and from school
- Internal exclusion
- Meeting with the governors' discipline committee
- Alternative provision
- A managed move to another local school with the consent of all parties, following the local managed move / Fair Access Policy
- A managed transfer to another local school
- Governors disciplinary panel
- Exclusion – Suspension or permanent exclusion