



THE DOWNS
MALVERN

Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy is relevant to all sections of the school, EYFS, Pre-Prep and Prep School.

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This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Code of Conduct Policy, Positive Handling (restraint) policy, Behaviour Policy, E-Safety Policy and Safeguarding Policy

This policy has regard to the updated DfE guidance 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2017). It draws on the 2019 DfE guidance on the Independent Schools Standards and also the previous guidance, 'Safe to Learn - Embedding Anti-Bullying Work in Schools' and considers the recommendations in the OFSTED Review of sexual abuse in schools and college (June 2021).

In relation to cyberbullying, the policy takes note of the DfE guidance: 'Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff (2014)' and 'Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying (2014)'. In relation to online safety, reference should also be made to the school's e-safety policy, to be found as part of the safeguarding policy.

"It is a basic entitlement of all children that they receive their education free from humiliation, oppression and abuse. Education is compulsory in our society and therefore it is the responsibility of all adults to ensure that it takes place in an atmosphere which is caring and protective." (D P Tattum).

1. Aims

The overall aims of this policy are the prevention of bullying and, should instances of bullying occur, to help staff and pupils to deal with it effectively.

In this respect the School seeks:

- To have a bullying free environment
- To ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of the nature and types of bullying that may occur, both in and out of school, and their causes and effects
- To ensure high expectations of pupils' behaviour, as detailed in the school's Behaviour Policy
- To enable children, parents and staff to feel confident in reporting concerns about any member of the community

- To use all pupils, staff and parents as a positive resource in the elimination of any form of bullying, drawing on peer pressure as a means of preventing bullying
- To ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware that bullying is totally unacceptable
- To ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities in addressing bullying issues
- To provide regular training in relation to the prevention of and response to bullying
- To have robust and effective systems for dealing with all levels and types of bullying
- To provide support for both victim and bully

2. Definition

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, by an individual or a group, which intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally and possibly causing psychological damage. It is usually repeated over a period of time, where it is often difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

It can happen anywhere, both in and out of school.

Bullying can have a negative life-long impact. It can make it difficult for children to learn and can have a lasting detrimental effect on their lives. Young people who have been bullied can become anxious and withdrawn, depressed or aggressive. Some turn to substance misuse as a way of dealing with it emotionally and, at worst, bullying has been a factor in suicide. (Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour).

Bullying can take various forms, including:

- Racial/Religious/Cultural – where someone is made to feel inferior because of their background, culture or religion.
- Sexual/sexist - behaviour, physical or non-physical, where sexuality or gender is used as a weapon against another. It is any behaviour which degrades someone, singles someone out using sexual language, gestures or violence, and victimising someone for their appearance. Sexual bullying is also pressured to act promiscuously and to act in a way that makes others uncomfortable.
- Homophobic - bullying based on sexual orientation
- Special Needs or Disability - any exploitation of a particular aspect of a child's disability and/or special educational needs
- Because a child is adopted or a carer
- Cyber-bullying via technology. For example, internet/mobile phones, email, social networks, text messages, online sexual harassment, sending of unwanted photographs or asking for/pressurising others to do so. (Please refer to separate section, below)

The School works with its pupils to develop a sense of respect and tolerance towards those with a protected characteristic and thus guard against bullying in relation to such characteristics. Bullying can include, repeated name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, pushing, taking belongings, inappropriate touching, producing offensive graffiti, spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours or regularly excluding someone from groups or games. It is also bullying when a young person is pressured to act against their will by others or is harassed by unwanted conduct, which violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or humiliating environment.

3. Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a child:

- Is unwilling to go to school
- Is frequently absent from school
- Regularly has homework which is not done or lost

- Changes their usual routine
- Becomes anxious, withdrawn or is lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to achieve less well in school work
- Has possessions which are damaged or “go missing”
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- Has tucked money or other money continually “lost”
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Stops eating
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Is frightened to say what’s wrong
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous or jumpy when a cyber message is received
- Is evasive or gives improbable excuses in relation to any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems or circumstances, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

4. Action against Bullying

It is essential that all adults in the school community know what to do when they suspect that a child is being bullied and which member of staff to contact. Whether bullying occurs in school, out of school or on-line, staff will have a range of appropriate strategies on which to call:

- Skilled observation to recognise and respond to the symptoms noted above.
- Ready receipt of reports of bullying behaviour, which are then investigated, acted upon and the information relating to the alleged bully and their victims reported as appropriate.
- Use of the school curriculum, for example in subjects such as PSHE, Circle time, story time, drama, English and history, to embrace the topic of bullying, including its dangers, how to prevent it and the steps to take when it occurs.
- Use of other elements of school life, including assemblies, form periods, house meetings, school council and visiting speakers.
- Use focussed projects, such as an annual Anti-Bullying Week and focussed training, for example in safe use of the internet.
- Availability of this policy on the school’s website to enable parents to understand the school’s approach and work together with staff.
- Close parent/teacher liaison to ensure that both home and school work together to help and support the victim and moderate the behaviour of the bully.
- Where appropriate and following discussion with the Headmaster, engagement with outside assistance, such as an educational psychologist, social worker or the police - in helping children who bully others.
- Ensuring that staff are fully aware of times and places when bullying is most likely to occur; organisation of the school day and supervision arrangements reduce the likely incidence of bullying. This includes supervision of changing and showering areas, monitoring the use of washrooms and cloakrooms at break times and the regular coverage of secluded areas at break times by duty staff.
- A good proportion of PE and games lessons and other physical activity to enable pupils to burn off energy and aggression.
- Use of the house system, Prefects (peer mentoring etc) and the School Council as part of the school’s pastoral care to encourage vertical bonding between age groups, giving older pupils a sense of responsibility and younger children a chance to externalise feelings and anxieties that they may not share with an adult member of staff or even their own family.
- All children are given the opportunity to speak to their teacher or a member of staff at The Downs Malvern (Circle of Care - Appendix 1)

- Through staff training and by regular discussion at staff meetings, raising the awareness of all staff to the dangers of bullying, how to prevent it, what action to take to resolve problems, and developing an understanding of the legal responsibilities and the sources of support available.
- Dove-tailing this policy with the school Behaviour Policy, so that all concerned are aware of the appropriate procedures and sanctions.
- Where appropriate, training in, or drawing on, external expertise in specialist skills to understand pupils' specific needs.

5. Cyberbullying

The School is conscious of the dangers of cyber-bullying in relation to both safeguarding and anti-bullying strategies. A range of measures is set in place to guard against it. The School's firewall and filtering systems are organised and monitored to ensure, so far as is possible, that pupils are protected from inappropriate content, including extremist materials and those designed to radicalise.

The School recognises that no filtering system is perfect and, in their ICT and PSHE lessons, pupils learn the steps they should take, should they encounter inappropriate content. The school also recognises that systems can only protect the pupils whilst using school equipment in school. In their ICT and PSHE lessons they therefore learn about appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and how to keep themselves safe whilst online away from the school premises. This includes the development of their resilience to resist radicalisation and how to protect themselves and take action if they encounter other forms of online bullying and harassment, including sexual bullying.

Similarly, the School provides information for parents and periodically runs workshops to enable them to gain a greater understanding of how they can help to keep their children safe online at home. In their ICT and PSHE lessons, through assemblies and focussed workshops, pupils also learn at an age-appropriate stage about the dangers of cyber-bullying via technology, for example through mobile phones, email, social networks, text messaging and photography. They are given guidance on how to resist and report such approaches, including exercising prudence in the use of personal information on social networking sites. Further information can be found in the school's E-safety Policy.

6. Procedures to Follow

This policy only works if it ensures that the whole school community understands that bullying is not to be tolerated and understands the steps that will be taken both to prevent and to respond to bullying.

The Role of the Headmaster

The Headmaster will be informed of any incidents of bullying and will ensure that all incidents are thoroughly investigated and properly logged centrally on TEAMS. The Headmaster will be responsible for ensuring the maintenance of a school bullying log and reporting on a termly basis via the Headmaster's Report to Governors.

The Headmaster will then collaborate with the Deputy Head Pastoral in ensuring that an investigation takes place in every case and each situation is treated seriously. If bullying is found to have definitely occurred, the parents of any children involved will be contacted and informed of what action the school is to take by the Headmaster or Deputy Head Pastoral.

The Headmaster will ensure that the Deputy Head Pastoral and all staff undertake appropriate training in taking action against bullying.

The Role of the Deputy Head Pastoral

The main roles of the Deputy Head Pastoral in respect of bullying are:

- Managing and monitoring practices to ensure alignment with the school anti-bullying policy and procedures.
- Maintaining a clear overview of the incidence of bullying and the school's anti-bullying prevention and response strategies.
- Liaison with the Headmaster and between all parties involved, including parents.
- Ensuring that incidents are recorded by staff in all cases and that a copy is forwarded to the Deputy Head Pastoral to keep on record in TEAMS or iSAMS.
- On a regular basis, analysis of the incident file in TEAMS so that patterns and trends can be identified, and the analysis used to improve policy and practice.
- Deployment of appropriate strategies to ensure that bullies change their behaviour and support them in doing so.

Endeavour to create a culture where pupils feel confident in coming forward to report incidences of bullying including those of a sexual nature. The Deputy Head Pastoral will be fully briefed by the Headmaster, who will ensure that they receive appropriate training, guidance and information.

The Role of the Pupils

From time-to-time pupils can feel vulnerable. This may be because they are new to the school, have problems at home, have health issues or are simply not coping as well with day-to-day life. All pupils have responsibility to help other pupils who are vulnerable. This includes not allowing them to feel 'ganged up' on, making fun of them or subjecting them to inappropriate, repetitive 'banter'.

Where possible, bullying behaviour should be challenged at the time. If this is not possible or feasible, the incident needs to be reported. Turning a 'blind eye' is not an option.

The following information is provided to pupils via our school PSHE curriculum, weekly assemblies, student council meetings and form time.

If a pupil witnesses or knows about a bullying incident, they should:

1. Fetch help from either an adult or a senior pupil if the person being bullied is in danger. If not, they should stay with the person being bullied as their presence may ease the situation.
2. Try to show the person doing the bullying that they disapprove of their actions and give support to the person being bullied.
3. Try to persuade the person being bullied to report the incident. If they will not, report it themselves to any member of staff.
4. Try not to escalate the situation or play down what happened.

A pupil who is being bullied should:

1. Not have to put up with any form of bullying behaviour. We can and will help to put a stop to it.
2. Feel free to speak out to their friends or any member of staff if they are being bullied. We can help you to cope with it straight away.
3. Inform a member of staff immediately when someone else is being bullied or is in distress,
4. Not be afraid to report any incidents. Watching and doing nothing can suggest support for the bully. Even if you are just a bystander, you have a role to play in reporting any incidence of bullying.
5. If they wish, inform the school of an incident involving bullying or perceived bullying but want to remain anonymous, you can write a note and put it in the "worry box".
6. Not put up with bullies in their group of friends. Bullies will soon stop if they are left out or are by themselves.

A pupil who is bullying can expect:

1. Their behaviour will be challenged and deemed unacceptable.
2. To be treated fairly and that they will be given an opportunity to explain their actions
3. To be given a chance to change their behaviour with support from staff, older pupils and possibly outside agencies.
4. Their parents to be informed of their behaviour
5. A sanction to be issued in accordance with the school's behaviour policy. Which may involve suspension from school.

The Role of the Staff

It is essential that all members of staff contribute to creating a school ethos which does not tolerate bullying and minimises the likelihood of incidents ever occurring.

- Staff must ensure that they have read and understand this policy. They must sign to confirm this.
- Staff must ensure that their training in taking action against bullying remains up to date - *Educare* and IAPS
- Staff will be aware of and exploit aspects the curriculum and wider aspects of school life where they can embrace the topic of bullying, including its dangers, how to prevent it and the steps to take when it occurs.
- All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered from bullying.
- All staff should be vigilant and open to the possibility of bullying occurring in the school and should avoid an attitude that is dismissive or suggests that "it doesn't happen here". In any case where bullying is reported or suspected, staff must follow this procedure:

1. In most cases the incident should be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who is approached.
2. Listen carefully and intently.
3. Reassure the child that you are sympathetic and that the problem will be resolved.
4. Do not ask any leading questions.
5. Do not promise to keep the issue confidential – it is important to maintain the pupils' trust by remaining honest.
6. Make a clear account of the conversation as soon as it has ended but try to avoid taking notes during discussion.
7. Report the matter as soon as is practical to the Phase Co-ordinators and Deputy Head Pastoral. In their absence, report the matter to the Headmaster.
8. Discuss with the Phase Co-ordinators and Deputy Head Pastoral how to proceed with, for example, further interviews, liaison with parents and what action is to be taken, in accordance with the School's Behaviour Policy.
9. Ensure that the incident continues to be fully recorded, together with details of what action has been taken, along with further alleged victim and alleged bully interviews.
10. Liaise with the Phase Co-ordinators and Deputy Head Pastoral to ensure that all staff are kept informed of the incident and action taken, as appropriate.
11. The alleged bully will always be interviewed separately to the alleged victim, and it will be made clear why their behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. They will be offered guidance on modifying their behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions.
12. Parents/guardians of all parties should be informed and invited to come into school, or have a conversation via video call/ phone call where applicable for boarders, to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought.
13. A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, should be agreed. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures.
14. It is recognised by staff that boarding children are unable to go home as often as day pupils and therefore cannot escape their bullies for long periods of time.

15. A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to closed the episode.
16. A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place. A risk assessment may be written.
17. Remember that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. Staff should refer to the section in the Behaviour Policy on positive handling.
18. A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm; the matter should be reported to the DSL and procedures should be followed, as detailed in the Safeguarding Policy. This is likely to involve reporting the incident to Social Services, and also to the police if it is believed that the safeguarding situation constitutes a criminal concern.
19. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following the Child Protection Policy and speaking to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy.

The Role of the Parents

- You may not recognise that your child is being bullied. However, changes in their manner, behaviour and general state of health can sometimes be explained by bullying.
- Encourage your child to talk about it but be patient. It is quite natural for them not to want to discuss the matter and not to want you to do anything about it.
- Listen and try not to interrupt.
- Reassure them that you are sympathetic and that it is a problem that can be solved.
- Ask them if there are ways of changing things and help them to try to develop strategies to cope, strategies which should then be practised.
- Try to keep the situation in proportion.
- Encourage your child to talk to their Form Tutor about the matter.
- You should feel free to contact your child's Form Tutor to discuss the matter if you are concerned.

7. Procedures for dealing with bullying outside school hours during term time

- This guidance is for parents should an incident of bullying occur outside school hours but in term time.
- Incidents of bullying that take place outside of school hours should be dealt with in the first instance by parents.
- Parents should report the incident in writing to the Form Teacher who will then decide whether further action within school is necessary.
- An incident of bullying that takes place outside of school during term time and continues within school will be dealt with by the appropriate members of staff in liaison with parents and pupils concerned.
- If the bullying involves an element of cyber-bullying the parents should collect the appropriate evidence by printing, photographing, and screenshotting the offending material. This can then be shared with school if required.

8. Procedures for dealing with bullying during holiday time.

This guidance is for parents should an incident of bullying occur during holiday time.

- Incidents of bullying that take place during the holiday should be dealt with by parents.
- If necessary, the parent should inform the Form Tutor in writing at the beginning of the new term, of the incident which took place in the holiday.
- If the incident of bullying is continuing and not resolved by the parents, appropriate members of staff within school deal with the incident in liaison with parents and pupils concerned.

Adam Dixon
Deputy Head Pastoral

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