



Anti-Bullying Policy

Our vision for behaviour at The Duchess's School is based on mutual respect. We work to encourage an ethos that puts support and consideration for others, empathy, tolerance and cooperation at the heart of what we do. We acknowledge that everyone in our school – adults and students have a part to play in securing this agenda by the behaviour that they model and demonstrate and by the way that we deal with and challenge behaviours that do not reflect our overall philosophy.

We appreciate, respect and, indeed, applaud and value difference, recognising that everyone brings their own unique talents and abilities and that the contributions that every individual makes helps to shape and mould the school culture and ethos. We are truly a school that is 'striving for success for all'.

We pride ourselves in the fact that we care about the people in our school – both adults and students- and are fully committed to the Healthy School and Healthy People and Healthy Business agendas, both of which underline or responsibility for the well-being of individuals within our organisation. We understand that individuals cannot reach their full potential unless they are happy and feel safe and, therefore, see this as a major priority in our work. The Every Child Matters agenda (DfES2004) is prominent in our thinking and we work to secure, safe and positive outcomes for all of our students and staff. We also recognise the rights of students (Human Rights Act 1998) to have themselves and their property treated with respect and to be free from ridicule, harassment, intimidation and humiliation. This policy document, in conjunction with other policies and practices, sees to ensure that we can and do meet our fullest obligation in these respects.

As a school we seek to be:

- Pro-active in setting up a range of preventative measures – through assembly, Citizenship and other events.

- Actively listen to students and, where appropriate, their parents or carers.
- Act appropriately on their behalf.

Whilst not a major problem in school, it does exist, and actions were needed to move this agenda forward. This view was supported by the Kirkland Rowell Education Perceptions Monitoring Exercise which, although we appear favourably by comparison with other schools, placed the bullying matter high in the priority of our young people. A considerable investment of effort has been made in promoting the bullying agenda across school (linked to national anti-bullying week) and the development of this policy links into this programme. Additionally, students have spent a considerable amount of time thinking about Bullying through the 'Steps to Success' programme. The thinking that emerged as a result of this process has informed this policy.

The journey of consultation will be:

- Developing thinking in conjunction with Year Councils and School Council. A draft will be put to them to prompt thinking/discussion.
- Consideration of policy by HoY/PMG/LG/Parent's Group and Governing Body.
- Promotion of policy across school and to parents through school Newsletter.
- It will be reviewed annually at staff and student levels. Annual events linked to anti-bullying week, in addition to on-going strategies and interventions, will help to keep the matter high on our agenda.

Bullying takes many forms, face-to-face or through third parties. We take all of these forms of bullying seriously and will always respond to these.

Some bullying is physical:

- Kicking, pushing, hitting
- Taking and damaging belongings

Some bullying is verbal:

- Name-calling
- Taunting, mocking
- Making offensive comments

- Making threats

Some bullying is relational:

- Exclude people from groups
- Deliberately ignoring
- Gossiping, spreading rumours

Some bullying uses modern technology such as mobile phones or the Internet:

- Text message bullying
- Phone-call bullying
- Picture / video clip via mobile phone cameras
- Mail bullying
- Chat room bullying
- Bullying through instant messaging
- Bullying via websites

1. Racist Bullying

Following the Stephen Lawrence incident, the 1999 MacPherson report defines racist bullying as “any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person”. A child or young person may be targeted for representing a group. Attacking the individual sends a message to that group. Incidents can include:

- Verbal abuse – name calling, racist jokes, offensive mockery / mimicry
- Physical aggression or threats
- Wearing offensive or provocative badges or other insignia
- Bringing racist leaflets, comics or magazines into the school or organisation’s premises
- Racist inciting of others
- Racist graffiti or other written insults including against food, music, dress or customs
- A refusal to associate with someone of other ethnic origin in work or play

For further information and guidance consult the Northumberland County Council anti-racism policy

2. Sexual Bullying

Sexual bullying is characterised by the following:

- Abusive name calling
- Looks and comments about appearance, attractiveness, emerging puberty
- Inappropriate and uninvited touching
- Sexual innuendoes and propositions
- Pornographic material
- Graffiti with sexual content

In its most extreme form, sexual bullying takes the form of sexual assault or even rape. Under these circumstances police would normally be involved as these are criminal offences.

Sexual Orientation

Pupils do not have to be lesbian, gay or bi-sexual to experience this type of bullying. In most cases being different can be enough.

For further information and guidance consult the DfES publication on homophobic bullying “Stand Up for Us”

See www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk/pdf/stand-up-for-us-04

3. Disabilities

Children and young people with special needs or disabilities are often at a great risk of being bullied, both directly and indirectly. The bullying is usually about their specific difficulties or their appearance. This is compounded by the fact that some of these children and young people may not be able to articulate their experiences.

Both boys and girls bully and can bully as individuals or as members of a group. Children who bully others come from any kind of social or cultural background. Adult bullying of children also occurs and is equally unacceptable. Bullying always creates inequalities and is damaging to all those involved. The person being bullied, the person who bullies and those who witness or know about the bullying are all affected in some way. Those who bully can experience difficult and unhappy relationships with both peers and adults and frequently need help to overcome these difficulties. Research evidence has shown that those who bully are more likely to engage in anti-social activities and have a greater prevalence of poor mental health.

A child or young person could have experienced both being bullied and having bullied others. Bullying is not a natural part of growing up and should never be accepted as such.

Those who bully may show aggression through for example, poor control of impulsive actions, a positive view of violence or a desire to dominate. They may exhibit anxiety through for example low self esteem or difficulties in making friends. They may be easily led in joining in bullying or in standing by whilst bullying takes place.

Those who bully may experience difficulty in admitting what they have done; be reluctant to admit that what they have done is wrong; suppress feelings of guilt; feel no remorse and repeat the hurtful action, especially if this goes unchallenged. Those who are bullied may spend their lives in fear. They often feel isolated from their peers and feel that they have done something to attract the bullying. Any child or young person can be bullied.

Those who are being bullied may experience:

- Unhappiness
- A sense of desolation and in some cases, desperation

- Reduced self esteem and self worth
- Poor academic performance
- Exclusion from normal social experience
- A strong desire to escape the situation which may result in absconding or truanting
- A desire to self-harm or even to commit suicide

Bullying should always be taken seriously.

All bullying is unacceptable, whether physical, sexual, verbal or psychological

Those who are being bullied may exhibit the following:

- Unwillingness to attend or participate in activities
- Unwillingness to venture into some areas of a building
- Fear of walking to school or of using public transport
- Underachievement
- Books or clothes destroyed
- Possessions and money going missing
- Signs of distress such as crying easily, lack of appetite
- Becoming withdrawn or disruptive and / or aggressive
- Stammering
- Stealing to pay the bully or replace missing possessions
- A variety of physical symptoms including cuts, bruising, aches, pain, faints, headaches, stomach upsets, bedwetting, disrupted sleep patterns
- A marked change in well established patterns of behaviour

Those who are bullied are often reluctant to say what is wrong or to seek help.

Organisations that tolerate bullying are less effective; morale is lower and absenteeism is more frequent.

All students at The Duchess’s School will receive a copy of the school’s Anti-Bullying leaflet (see appendix). This will be distributed following an assembly that focuses on this topic and there will be subsequent discussion of it during a tutorial period. We will ensure, therefore, that all students are aware of the school’s stand on this matter and where they might go in any time of need. There are a variety of people who are well placed to advise or support a student and these are detailed on the leaflet. Parents will be advised of the school policy through newsletters and the distribution of materials at Consultation Meetings and Open Evenings.

We will ensure that our anti-bullying policy is successfully implemented by putting the following strategies / decisions / protocols into play:

- Mrs Drummond (HoY will take a lead within the Pastoral Team, for the Bullying agenda.

- We will consult with students/staff and parents regularly in the review of the policy.
- We will promote the bullying agenda annually by linking into the national anti-bullying week each November.
- We will develop systems for peer support and mediation.
- We will provide awareness raising/training sessions for staff as appropriate.
- We will ensure activity within the Citizenship curriculum that addresses this matter.
- We will work, as appropriate, with local agencies including police, school nurse etc in addressing the bullying matter.
- We will ensure adequate supervision in high risk areas.

Plan of Action/Monitoring:

When bullying is reported we will first and foremost seek to provide the right degree of support for the bullied. Their well-being is paramount.

We will document and record details.

This will detail the nature of the incident, witness accounts and actions taken. This can then be used for termly analyses. Any picture that may be created can, therefore, give regular rise to necessary action within school.

A variety of responses to a bullying situation may be made. These could include:

- Mediation – peer or teacher
- Referral to an outside agency for support
- Application of sanctions – at an appropriate level
- Contact with parents
- Involvement of Community Police

Clearly, where continued bullying occurs, the range of sanctions applied against the bully will increase according to the Ladder of Consequence. Serious bullying – harassment or physical abuse/assault may immediately be referred to the police and investigation could follow.

As has been previously indicated within this policy, a range of preventative measures are in place within school. We understand our obligation to be pro-active in this regard and will ensure that the following happen regularly within school.

- Distribution of the student leaflet with explanation and opportunity to discuss.
- Assemblies with a bullying focus.
- Citizenship lessons that allow for more detailed exploration of the subject.
- Annual competitions e.g. poetry writing with a bullying theme.

- Posters displayed around school
- Activity linked to the national anti-bullying week e.g. come in blue day.
- Drop-Inn sessions and easy access to Year Staff.
- Peer-support and mediation.

Each reported incident of bullying will be documented on the sheets provided. These will be filed within the Pastoral Office. A summary of bullying incidents will be produced on a half-termly basis using the "Monitoring of Bullying Incidents" sheets shown in the appendix. This will be discussed at Head of Year / PMG as appropriate and any changes to processes or structures made as a result of findings.

- School Behaviour policy, including ladder of consequence and Three Ways Forward (links).
- Child Protection and Confidentiality Policies.
- Citizenship/PHSE Programmes
- Health and Safety Policy.

February 2007

To be reviewed February 2009