

The AIn Community Schools Federation

Applicable to The Duchess's Community High School

Policy – Anti-Bullying Policy and Guidelines

Statement of Principle and Aims

Our vision for behaviour at the Duchess's School is based on mutual respect. We work to encourage an ethos that puts honesty, empathy, respect and tolerance at the heart of what we do. We acknowledge that all our stakeholders have a part to play in securing this by delivering behaviours that reflect our philosophy.

We respect and value difference, recognising that everyone brings their own unique talent and abilities to the school that 'strives for success for all'.

We pride ourselves in the fact that we care about the people in our school. 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.

We work to secure, safe positive outcomes for all of our students and staff. We also recognise the rights of students 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 measure though assembly, PSHE, the daily tutor program and the anti-bullying ambassador scheme.
- Actively listen to students and where appropriate, their parents or carers.
- Act appropriately on their behalf.

Definitions of Bullying

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 messages
- Phone calls
- Picture/video clip via mobile phone cameras
- Chat rooms
- Bullying through instant messaging
- Bullying via websites

Bullying by race, gender, sexual orientation or disability:

1. Racist Bullying

“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.

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.

Factors hindering schools in challenging homophobic bullying include staff inexperience and parental disapproval.

For further information and guidance consult the DFE publication 'Keeping children safe in education – March 2015'

Or visit

http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_school/education_for_all/quick_links/education_resources/9726.asp

3. Disabilities

Children and young people with special needs or disabilities are often at a greater 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.

Recognising bullying:

Many of the bullying investigations that we initiate stem from comments made via social media which then spill into daily life at the school.

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 ways.

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 the 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 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 using public transport.
- Deteriorating patterns of attendance.
- Failure to make expected progress.
- Books or clothes destroyed.
- Possessions or 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, disturbed sleeping patterns.
- A marked change in well-established patterns of behaviour.

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

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

Strategies – dealing with bullying on school premises and outside school premises

All students at The Duchess's School will receive a bullying awareness card. 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 card. 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:

- 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 through the Diana Award.
- We will provide awareness raising/training sessions for all staff as appropriate.
- We will plan a scheme of work within the PSHE 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 open a formal Bullying Investigation process and seek to provide the right degree of support.

A variety of responses may be made:

These could include:

- A restorative conversation/mediation.
- Referral to an outside agency for transport.
- Application of sanctions.
- Contact with parents.
- Involvement of Community Police.

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

Preventive work

We understand our obligation to be pro-active in this regard and will ensure that the following happen regularly within school.

- Assemblies with a bullying focus. Including the use of external partners.
- PSHE 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.
- A consistent approach through the tutor program.
- Peer-support and mediation.
- Coaching of students through the Diana Award
- Establishing Anti-Bullying Ambassadors
- E-Safety Education

Current Situation

We continue to monitor statistics that relate to bullying and pupil and parent perspectives are sought bi-annually through our Kirkland Rowell Surveys.

The most recent surveys tell us that:

Pupils:

2012 - 86.8% of students said they were happy with the school's control of bullying. This is significantly higher than national figures and represents an increase of 11.4% on the previous survey of 2010.

Parents:

2013* - 67.7% of parents said they were happy with the schools control of bullying. This is an increase of the 2011 figures and higher than national average.

Parents place control of bullying 8th in their list of priorities for the school.

* at time of writing, the 2015 results were not yet published

Ofsted Parent View:

One of the questions on the Ofsted website relates to the way school responds to bullying. Current responses indicate that 25% of responders strongly agree, 44% agree, 4% disagree and 3% strongly disagree that we deal with bullying effectively.

Although these results are positive we are never complacent about bullying and recognise there are improvements to be made. We seek to review these approaches with the annual review of our policy and this will include discussion in year and school councils as well and amongst staff and parents.

Links to other Policies

- School behaviour policy, including ladder of consequence and Three Ways Forward.
- Child Protection and Confidentiality Policies.
- Citizenship/PSHE Programmes.
- Health and Safety Policy.
- E-Safety Policy
- Policies and Procedures linked to the Equality Act 2010
- Safeguarding

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