



5.6

POLICY ON ANTI-BULLYING

Aim - Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination are not tolerated at The Downs.

At The Downs our community is based upon respect, tolerance good manner and grace. We are committed to providing a safe, calm and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment or bullying so that every one of our children can develop to their full potential. We expect our pupils - indeed all members of our community - to treat each other with courtesy, respect and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed, happy and supportive atmosphere.

The Downs prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents and carers have an important role in supporting The Downs in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that the school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate and support one another. Not least to promote this partnership this policy is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on our website, in the Parent Handbook and on request from the School Office. It is also communicated and easily available to all staff and leaflets of appropriate language are much displayed for the children.

This policy applies to all pupils in the school, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Objectives of the Bullying Policy

- To define the various forms of bullying
- To stress that bullying at The Downs is taken very seriously
- To raise awareness of bullying
- To highlight the school's response to bullying and the procedures in dealing with bullying
- To highlight the Complaints Procedure.

The definition of bullying at The Downs and Bertie's

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, repeated teasing or banter, cyber-bullying, child-on-child abuse or sexting via social media), and can be motivated by prejudice against particular groups or protected characteristics, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, needs, appearance or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual or perceived differences between children. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical.

Bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves or forces them into situations or action they are not comfortable with. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Cyber-bullying

Mobile technology and social media can lead to 'virtual' bullying, which can occur outside school, but the consequences are felt both in-school and outside. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. Sexting and sextortion is a particularly damaging form of cyber bullying.

If staff have concerns that cyber-bullying or sexting has, or is, taking place, they should contact SLT and DSL to investigate. At no point should staff knowingly view sexting images or ask for them to be sent to personal devices. Separate advice on teachers' powers to search (including statutory guidance on dealing with electronic devices) is available – please refer to Childnet International. In the meantime reference should be made the school's E-safety and Acceptable use of IT policy 3.16.

The Seriousness of Bullying

At The Downs we always treat bullying very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the school's values and expectations, and potentially with its policy on equal opportunities, and will not be tolerated.

Bullying can be so serious that it causes physical, emotional and psychological damage, eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide, indeed 'where there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm', a bullying incident may be addressed as a child protection issue. Whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to

harassment and to violent and threatening behaviour. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying: everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are victims of bullying will be supported by the school. Pupils who have engaged in bullying behaviour (perpetrator) will be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanction and will also, where possible, be supported in learning different ways of behaving.

Bullying which occurs on school trips or outside of the school's premises will not be tolerated any more than bullying on school premises. Teachers will, where appropriate, discipline pupils for misbehaviour outside school premises and outside school hours.

Awareness of Bullying

The school regularly promotes the awareness of bullying in the community. Such vehicles as assemblies / Circle Time, the PHSE programme, the Form Teacher System, are used to discuss the issue.

Signs of Bullying

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually poor work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoiled by others
- Books, bags, and other belongings suddenly go "missing", or are damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self-confidence
- Frequent visits to the Matron with symptoms which may relate to stress or anxiety, such as stomach pains or headaches;
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance or late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults rather than peers
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping or experiencing nightmares Talking of suicide or running away from home or school.

Signs of bullying may not be limited to the above list and there may be other causes to some of the above symptoms, a repetition or combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers and reported/ recorded as appropriate (see below).

Recognising Bullies (perpetrators):

There is no unique collection of characteristics that add up to a bully.

Perpetrators are not always easily recognised. They can be pupils who are:

- academically achieving less or better than their peers
- unpopular or insecure
- victims and exercise little self control

- unsympathetic
- lacking guilt: they may rationalise that the victim somehow “deserves” the bullying treatment.

The school’s response to bullying and procedures that might be followed

We take the following preventative measures in order to ensure that bullying does not become a problem which is associated with The Downs;

Pupils:

- All new pupils - including our youngest - are briefed thoroughly on the school's expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying. We support that those who report bullying in good faith will not be punished and will be supported. This message is shared in school assemblies throughout the year.
- The School runs an Anti-Bully Ambassador programme. This is a programme run by pupils, for pupils and all Ambassadors have undergone external training to support them in their role, they meet half termly and conduct school assemblies to share the message to peers.
- Avoid use of prejudice-based language in school, but promote the terms victim and perpetrator when discussing bullying.
- We use appropriate assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying.
- Our PSHE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. The programme is structured to enforce messages about community involvement and taking care of each other
- Other lessons, particularly TPR, English and Drama highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by developing social skills and by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable
- All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know or suspect that bullying is taking place. The responsibility of a bystander to report bullying incidents is extremely important.
- Conduct relevant group intervention sessions to address topical issues which may arise.

Staff

- Upon induction, all new members of staff are given guidance on the school's anti-bullying policy and on how to react to and record allegations of bullying at The Downs. All school staff understand the principles of the school policy, their legal responsibilities, actions to be taken to resolve and prevent problems and sources of further support
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated quickly. We monitor reported incidents. Records of incidents are kept securely on CPOMS tracking system by the Deputy Head and Heads of Section (HOS). They are regularly monitored and scrutinised for patterns of behaviour
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site. They are aware of the sites where bullying might occur and they are alert to inappropriate language or behaviour

- It is the aim of the school to provide exceptional pastoral care. We have a strong network of pastoral care in which the HOS, Form Teachers, Tutors and Matrons all play an essential role. The Downs is a nurturing, caring environment. The 'network' continually provides the opportunity for friendly, informal discussion of matters of concern. There are also formal Form Teacher Meetings and Section Meetings each week, as well as weekly Section Head meeting with the DHP
- The school has the right, and duty, to investigate incidents of bullying involving our pupils which take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips or that otherwise occur outside of school. The school has the right to take disciplinary measures in respect of such acts

Parents

- We encourage close contact between the school and parents/ guardians, and will always make contact with parents if we are worried about a pupil's well-being
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures and all other aspects and results of the school's anti-bullying policy

Cyber bullying – preventative measures

For the prevention of cyber-bullying, in addition to the measures described above, The Downs:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its E-Safety and Acceptable Use of ICT Policy (Staff Handbook) & Parent Handbook
- Each year parents have to counter sign the children's acceptance of the E-Safety-Policy that is written in language appropriate to all year groups
- Block certain sites by use of our filtering system and our firewall system, which the IT Department monitors pupils' use
- Imposes disciplinary sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse, of the internet
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in PSHE lessons, which covers blocking, removing contacts from "friend" lists and sharing personal data
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe
- Hold regular e-safety assemblies or intervention sessions
- Hold annual parental e-safety talks
- Does not allow the use of mobile phones or cameras

Procedures for dealing with bullying

- The Downs ensures that all instances of concerns about bullying and cyberbullying on and away from school premises are easy to report and that they are recorded properly. Records of bullying and allegations of bullying should be recorded by the member of staff witnessing the behavior or being disclosed to, on CPOMS. Section Heads and DHP regularly monitor CPOMS updates, this enables the school to identify

- patterns of behaviour and to evaluate the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy and the response
- If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures will be adopted
 - The member of staff to whom it was reported, or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved
 - The victim will be interviewed on their own (or, if appropriate, with a suitable person present for support) and usually be asked to write an account of events. Deputy Head Pastoral will be made aware of the incident and they might choose to become directly involved at this point.
 - The perpetrator(s) and all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually (or, if appropriate, with a suitable person present for support) and often asked to write an account of events
 - The incident will be recorded on CPOMS
 - The Deputy Head monitors CPOMS regularly. They will transfer any incident of bullying into the bullying log
 - Parents of both the victim and perpetrator will, where appropriate, be informed of the incident and actions the school is taking
 - They will suitably inform colleagues of both the perpetrator(s) and the victim[s] as soon as possible. In very serious incidents, the Head will be informed
 - The victim will be interviewed again at a later stage often separately from the alleged perpetrator. They will be offered support to develop a strategy of support. It will be made clear to them why revenge or retaliation is inappropriate
 - The alleged perpetrator will be interviewed again at a later stage often separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why their behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. They will be offered guidance on modifying their behaviour.
 - The school's Behaviour Management Policy may be invoked. Under the school policy sanctions might include reflection, major detention, internally excluded,, withdrawal of privileges or suspension from school. The school may exclude a pupil, either temporarily or permanently, in cases of severe or persistent bullying or in the event that the support put in place for the bully does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level
 - In the case of severe or persistent bullying, the parents/ guardians will be informed and requested to attend school to discuss the matter. They will meet the Deputy Head Pastoral. In the case of unusually severe circumstances after collaboration with the Leadership Team, it will be decided if the threshold has been reached to involve outside agencies
 - In meeting parents a way forward, including where appropriate disciplinary sanctions and counselling, will be determined, and where possible agreed with all parties. It is recognised that suitable support is needed both for victims and perpetrators.
 - A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place and put on record.

EYFS - Reception Children

- Even the youngest children at The Downs are encouraged to behave towards each other with kindness and consideration. They are encouraged to learn to look after their own possessions and to respect others' possessions. We expect them to be honest, helpful and polite, and to work hard and to listen to others. They should respect everyone and learn to value differences and diversity. The Head of Pre-Prep (HPP) is in charge of the management of behaviour in Reception
- We explain to children why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful to others. We rarely need to impose sanctions in Reception but sometimes we may remove a treat or golden time for hurtful behaviour. Occasionally, a child may be sent to see the HPP, who will explain the inappropriateness of a particular action; but such instances are rare. Parents are always informed when any sanction or reproof is needed, and in cases of repeated instances of hurtful or inappropriate behaviour, they will be invited into the school to discuss the situation with their child's teacher and the HPP to agree a joint way of handling the difficulty.
- Copies of our Behaviour Management Policy for EYFS children are available in the Parent Handbook – on the parent Portal.

Complaints Procedure

Parents and pupils are encouraged to use our Complaints Procedure (which is published on our website) if they feel that any concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly. Parents of EYES children should be aware that they have the right to refer a complaint directly to Ofsted, if they are unhappy with the way in which their complaint has been handled (The Complaints Procedure explains how to complain to Ofsted).]

Associated Downs School policies

- The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy including appendices 3
- Prevent Duty Risk Assessment
- Behaviour Policy
- E-Safety & Acceptable Use of ICT Policy

Associated Publications

- Preventing and Tackling Bullying, (October 2014), non-statutory DfE advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies
- KCSIE September 2024
- DfE factsheet; School support for children and young people who are bullied. March 2014
- The Equality Act 2010

External links; Childnet International; the UK's safer internet centre Beatbullying; the leading bullying prevention charity in the UK which provides anti-bullying resources, information, advice and support for young people, parents and professionals affected by bullying.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance has an excellent website with plenty of resource which can be accessed by clicking [here](#)

The following organisations also provide support

Kidscape

The Diana Award

Childline

NSPCC

Young Minds

Family Lives

ChildNet International (specialist resource to raise awareness of online safety)

Monitoring and Evaluation

All recorded incidents of bullying (on CPOMS) are recorded in the bullying log, investigated, actioned and monitored accordingly. The Bullying Log is monitored by the Deputy Head and signed off termly by the Head. An evaluation as to the effectiveness of the schools policy and procedures is made annually and adjustments made of necessary. In the event of a serious case of bullying a review is immediately made.

The policy is evaluated termly against the ISRR's and updated as advised. The policy and procedures are evaluated annually by the Risk and Regulatory Committee.

This policy was updated on	Signed on behalf of the School	Date for review
<i>01/11/24</i>	<i>O Elliott</i>	<i>01/11/2025</i>

Overview required by RRC	Policy upload to ISI Portal - date	Policy uploaded to website(s) - date
<i>November 2023</i>	<i>November 2023</i>	<i>November 2023</i>