

Bullying and Equalities Policy

Policy Statement – Pupil Rights

Rationale

Our anti-bullying and equalities policy outlines the importance of developing respectful relationships within school communities, emphasising the importance of creating environments where everyone feels safe and respected in order to support attainment and achievement. It provides guidance to pupils, staff, parents and carers at Dumfries Academy on preventing, responding to and reducing bullying behaviour by working collaboratively. It promotes nurturing and restorative approaches, in keeping with the standards set by Education Scotland and in line with Dumfries and Galloway's Respect for All anti-bullying guidelines 2018.

Aims

Definitions of Bullying

“Bullying is both behaviour and impact; the impact is on a person’s capacity to feel in control of themselves. This is what we term as their sense of ‘agency’. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships; it is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out. This behaviour happens face to face and online.” (Respect for All, Scottish Government, 2017)

It is important that those who have to deal with alleged or suspected cases of bullying have a clear understanding as to what constitutes bullying behaviour. Children will tease, fall in and out with each other, have arguments, stop talking to each other and have disagreements. This is a normal part of growing up and should be distinguished from bullying. However, in an environment where this behaviour is left unchecked, it can lead to bullying. Making those being bullied feel afraid, helpless, anxious and unsafe in their environment. It should be defined by the impact it is having on the person or people affected.

Bullying is a combination of behaviours and the impact they have. Examples of bullying include the following:

- Verbal: including name calling, racist, sexist or cultural comments or frequent comments focussing on a person’s appearance, spreading rumours, teasing or talking about people.
- Physical: threat or intimidation, hitting, kicking, pushing, or taking or damaging someone else’s property.
- Emotional: excluding people from the group, embarrassing someone or making them feel bad for being different, removal or threat of removal of items or possessions.
- ‘Borrowing’ money.
- Online: sending messages, texts or images that hurt, humiliate, intimidate or embarrass others. Some online behaviour is illegal. If an individual sends posts or forwards indecent, racist, sectarian, threatening or inflammatory comments or photographs, they may be committing an offence and may be subject to prosecution.

- Unlawful: Prejudice-based bullying towards those with protected characteristics: such as disability, sex (gender), race, religion or belief, sexual orientation.
- Other prejudice-based bullying: body image, socio-economic, care experienced children and young carers.

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on local authorities to promote equality, and foster good relations and eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Spotting the signs

A young person who is being bullied may feel:

- Pain or hurt
- Weak and powerless to make things better
- That it may be their fault
- Fear
- Isolation
- Less confident
- Anxious about making it worse if they tell someone

Prevention of Bullying (Pro-active strategies, reactive strategies, monitoring and evaluation)

Bullying behaviour will not be tolerated at Dumfries Academy.

Action

The manner in which bullying behaviour is dealt with contributes to the ethos of the school. It is vital that we engage directly with;

- **Communicating Awareness**
- **Reporting Bullying Behaviour**
- **Restorative Measures to prevent re occurrence and educate perpetrator**

Communicating Awareness

The prevention of bullying and up-skilling students in recognising and reporting bullying is embedded within the school's Values, Visions and Aims. The Positive Behaviour policy named 'Ready, Respectful, Safe' delivers the message that every individual at Dumfries Academy has the right to attend school in an environment where they feel safe and respected, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, colour, race, or religion. These messages are embedded in all aspects of education taught at Dumfries Academy.

Methods where equality will be delivered at Dumfries Academy:

- General classroom and social area ethos
- School assemblies
- Personal and Social Education
- Health and Wellbeing
- Extra-Curricular/School trips

Reporting Bullying Behaviour

It is equally important that young people and staff are aware of how to recognise bullying behaviour and how to report it.

Staff

All staff will undertake mandatory Child Protection training from Dumfries and Galloway Council every 3 years along with, annually delivered, school-based Child Protection training from the school CP officer. Part of this training will be to educate staff on what bullying is, the forms it takes and how to recognise the signs of a person being bullied. This training will also direct staff on the procedures to be followed when bullying is suspected.

If a member of staff suspects that, a child is being bullied or it is disclosed to them by the child, or a third party, the member of staff should:

- Listen carefully to all details being disclosed and state that they will pass the information on.
- If suspecting a bullying incident, take careful notes of your suspicions and record times, dates, mental or physical evidence, and any individuals involved, be it bully, bullied or witness.
- Pass on all of the relevant information to the Pupil Support Teacher of the alleged victim of bullying.

PTs Pupil Support are listed below:

- **S1&S4- Mr Leonard**
- **S2&S5- Miss Barton**
- **S3&S6- Mrs Wilson**

Young people

An ethos of equality will be embedded in all that is delivered at Dumfries Academy. Young people will be educated to understand that bullying of any form will not be tolerated at Dumfries Academy. Through PSE, Assemblies, HWB and whole school events, pupils will be taught to respect the rights of all and the need for fairness and equality. Young people will be educated to recognise the signs of a young person who is being victimised, isolated or bullied. They will be informed of the need to act upon suspicions, and their moral duty to report instances of bullying or abuse. Young people will be informed who to report bullying to and how to report it.

Recording Bullying Events

All instances of suspected bullying, **whether confirmed or not**, will be recorded in Pastoral Notes by PT Pupil Support or DHT with House responsibility. Confirmed cases of bullying will be recorded on SEEMiS Bullying Module and on the SMT central recording sheet.

Restorative Measures to prevent re-occurrence and educate the Perpetrator

At Dumfries Academy, we fundamentally believe that Education is the vehicle to eliminate prejudice and inequality. Parents and young people involved in bullying will be contacted to discuss individual instances of bullying or inequality. We strive to ensure that all young people understand that there are consequences to be incurred if a young person engages in any form of bullying. However, we also recognise that there should be a satisfactory outcome to every bullying incident; for both the bully and the person being bullied.

The Bullied and Parents/Carers

The young person and their parents/carers must be satisfied that there have been consequences for the bully; however they must also be aware of the need to engage in restorative measures in the form of education to ensure that there are no re-occurrences. Both the young person and their parents/carers must be confident that the bullying incident will not re-occur. To this end, the end of every investigation and restorative process must see the young person and his her/parents satisfied that the event has been dealt with satisfactorily.

The Bully and Parents/Carers

The young person and the parents/carers must engage in discussions and restorative practice ensuring that there will be no re-occurrence of the bullying behaviour. It is important that both the young person and the parents/carers are aware of the importance of equality and the impact of bullying or discriminatory behaviour. Young people should be asked to consider what the impact of bullying and isolation would have on them and recognise the consequences of their actions on others. Through this, students should learn that this form of behaviour cannot be tolerated. To this end, both parents and young people must demonstrate a recognition of the impact of the behaviour on others and give the assurance that they understand it cannot be repeated.

Dumfries and Galloway Respect for all Anti Bullying Guidelines

This school based policy statement will work in concurrence with The Education departments 2018 'Respect for All anti-bullying Statement'