



Anti-Bullying Policy

Scope

Downside School understands that this is a regulatory policy. This policy and its effectiveness will be reviewed regularly by governors – at least annually – and will be amended as necessary according to the latest statutory guidance and advice.

This policy is written for pupils. For staff, a Dignity at Work Policy, which addresses bullying, can be found in the Employee Handbook.

“In the first place, to love the Lord God with our whole heart, our whole soul, our whole strength, then our neighbours as ourselves” – Rule of St Benedict, Ch 4

1. Aims and Objectives

1.1. The Rule of St. Benedict sets out our standards for the life of a community. *'They try to be the first to show respect to one another with the greatest patience in tolerating weaknesses in body or character... No one aims at personal advantage but is rather concerned for the good of others.'*

1.2. Bullying, whether verbal or behavioural, is about intimidation, persecution and abuse of power directed towards the vulnerable in any community. The Rule of St. Benedict, by contrast, speaks of a community of tolerance, wholeness, service and respect for others; a place where a person can grow as God intended. A community living by the Rule of St. Benedict must offer a stable and peaceful home to people of every temperament and ability, background and outlook. All will be helped to reflect on the ways in which they can contribute to and live up to this ideal. Bullying is the antithesis of a community of faith and virtue, and so must be confronted firmly and with compassion. It is an injustice which must be challenged.

1.3. Downside School (the School) supports the right of all members of the School community to be free from all forms of bullying, harassment and discrimination. We wish to create and maintain a caring and supportive school environment by making clear that bullying will not be tolerated and that positive steps will be taken to eradicate it. We aim to create an atmosphere in which staff, parents and pupils are encouraged to bring out into the open any incident of bullying, knowing that measures to deal with it will have the support of the whole School community.

2. Policy Statement

2.1. This policy applies to all pupils and staff at the **School** irrespective of their age and whether or not a pupil is in the care of the School when or if bullying behaviour occurs. While this policy focuses mainly on the bullying of pupils by other pupils, it is recognised that other forms of bullying may occur and this is addressed in section 4.

2.2. This policy is provided to all parents and pupils and staff via the School's website. It can be requested from the Head Master's PA and can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

2.3. This policy has been drawn up with assistance from guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE), *Preventing and tackling bullying* (July 2017) and will be reviewed against any new government guidance issued from time to time.

3. Assumptions

3.1. All forms of bullying as described in this document are unacceptable.

3.2. Every person in Downside has the right to live his or her life and pursue a career without the threat or the occurrence of being bullied.

3.3. Bullying, and in some cases being the object of bullying, is a pattern of behaviour acquired either consciously or by habit and can be unlearned.

4. Definitions

4.1 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, cyber bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

4.2. Bullying may be:

- **Physical:** hitting, kicking, pushing people around, spitting; or taking, damaging or hiding possessions
- **Verbal:** name-calling, taunting, teasing, insulting or demanding money
- **Exclusionary Behaviour:** intimidating, isolating or excluding a person from a group
- **General Unkindness:** spreading rumours or writing unkind notes, mobile phone texts or e-mails, distracting another person from their work; or
- **Cyberbullying:** using the internet, mobile phones, social networking sites (such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, WhatsApp, Google + etc.) to deliberately upset someone else (see section below).

Bullying may also be:

- Sexual:** talking to or touching someone in a sexually inappropriate way
- Sexist:** related to a person's gender or gender reassignment
- Racist,** or regarding someone's religion, belief or culture
- related to a person's sexual orientation (homophobic)
- related to pregnancy and maternity
- related to a person's age or home circumstances; or related to a person's disability, special educational needs, learning difficulty, health or appearance.

4.3. Not all hurtful behaviour is intentional . Some individuals may see their hurtful conduct as "teasing" or "a game" or "for the good of" the other person. These forms of bullying are equally unacceptable but may not be malicious and can often be corrected quickly with advice and without disciplinary sanctions. A bully who does not respond appropriately to advice or sanctions would ultimately have to leave the School.

4.4. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure, whatever the circumstances, that no-one becomes a victim of bullying. A person may be vulnerable to bullying because of his / her age, physical appearance, nationality, colour, gender, sexual orientation, religion, culture or disability, or because he / she is new in the School, appears to be uncertain or has no friends. He / she may also become a target because of an irrational decision by a bully.

4.5. A person who makes a physical or sexual assault on another, or who steals or causes damage to the property of another, commits a criminal offence and also a civil wrong known as a "tort" for which there can be legal consequences outside the School. Bullying behaviour may also be regarded as threatening behaviour or harassment which can be either a criminal offence or a civil wrong. Misuse of electronic communications could also be a criminal offence, for example it is an offence to send an electronic communication (such as a text message or e-mail) to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety.

5. Cyber bullying

5.1. The School has a separate policy which deals with "cyberbullying" (see "Acceptable ICT Use Policy" and guidance for pupils in the School's Child Protection Policy). Cyberbullying is the use of information and communications technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. For instance cyberbullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video.

6. What will be done to prevent bullying at Downside

6.1. We will take active steps to create an anti-bullying culture and an expectation of all members of the School community to uphold the principles of Living at Downside contained in the School's Behaviour Policy:

6.1.1. We (staff and pupils) will do all we can to create a climate in which bullying is not tolerated, and in which pupils can report bullying incidents without feeling that they are 'telling tales'. Staff, pupils and parents will be involved in this process of creating and supporting a whole school anti-bullying culture.

6.1.2. We will ensure that all members of staff are aware of their responsibility to watch out for and respond appropriately to any possible bullying behaviour. They should refrain from any words or actions in the classroom which might be seen as an encouragement to bullying or as bullying behaviour in itself.

6.1.3. We will make pupils aware that expressions of prejudice which include racism, sexism and homophobia, will not be tolerated.

6.1.4. We will give pupils the opportunity to see the School counsellor or contact the Independent Listener. All Houses have a notice which gives pupils guidance if they have any worries or complaints and lists of organisations outside school who can be contacted if victims of bullies prefer to talk to someone who is independent. This guidance is also published in the 'Pupil Handbook & Prep Diary'.

6.1.5. We will educate pupils on the use of the internet so as to try to prevent the occurrence of Cyber bullying. Our approach will be to educate rather than restrict access but restrictions which are deemed necessary will be enforced in the use of social networking sites. Pupils and staff will be made aware of the School's Acceptable Use Policy on the use of digital media.

6.1.6. We will encourage pupils to talk openly and regularly about the issue within tutorial groups, in their Houses, in the School Council, or in conversations with other appropriate members of staff or chaplains. We will also seek to ensure that the School and House prefects are fully supportive of this policy and play an important role in its successful implementation.

6.1.7. We will ensure that the School curriculum addresses issues of bullying and encourages pupils and staff to share ideas on preventing it. There will be a strong Anti-Bullying presence within the SMSC programme and within the Tutor Programme.

6.1.8. We will do all we can to resolve issues of bullying through mediation, discussion and making bullies aware of the effects of their actions, but we will use sanctions against them when this is deemed necessary. These sanctions will be in line with School policy. We will often use pupils to encourage other boys and girls not to continue with their behaviour.

6.1.9. We will encourage bullies willingly to seek help themselves in changing their behaviour. This will be catalysed by educating pupils as to why they and their peers may find themselves bullying others.

6.1.10. We will give protection and support to any victims of bullying and to anyone who brings such issues to our attention.

7. Equal opportunities

7.1. In School and in every year group:

- discriminatory words and behaviour are treated as unacceptable;
- positive attitudes are fostered towards people who are disabled, who have special educational needs and towards ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups within and outside the School; and
- positive attitudes are fostered towards both sexes through the curriculum and tutorials.

8. Staff

8.1. The awareness of members of staff is raised through training and they are expected to understand the principles of the school policy, to know their legal responsibilities, what action to take to resolve and prevent problems, and what sources of support are available; where appropriate, the School will invest in specialised skills to understand the needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) pupils. Staff are expected to promote an anti-bullying culture by:

- celebrating achievement;
- anticipating problems and providing support;
- disciplining sensibly and fairly;
- making opportunities to listen to pupils; and
- acting as advocates of pupils.

9. Pupils

9.1 Through our pastoral care systems, pupils are informed and taught that bullying will not be tolerated in the School. They are encouraged:

- to celebrate the effort and achievements of others;
- to hold and promote positive attitudes;

- to feel able to share problems with staff;
- to turn to someone they trust, if they have a problem;
- not to feel guilty about airing complaints.

10. Anti-bullying systems

10.1. **Approach:** Our systems for detecting and dealing with bullying are designed to operate:

- vertically, through all year groups and Houses; and
- horizontally, within year groups and in the classroom and other activities.

Our anti-bullying systems are implemented and driven in the way described below.

11. Vigilance

11.1. Members of staff are vigilant at all times but particularly:

- before lessons; in the School corridors, in the queue at the Refectories and in the Refectories themselves;
 - in Houses;
 - in social areas
 - on the games field, and
 - on School transport.

12. Meetings

12.1. Bullying is regularly discussed in meetings between:

- members of the School Student Council and House Councils;
- the Director of Pastoral Care and School Prefects;
- House Masters and House Mistresses;
- tutors and pupils in their tutor group; and
- Pastoral House teams.
- The result of these meetings is to feedback information about friendship patterns,
- particular incidents, any pupil who seems to be isolated, any growing "power base" and any known conflict between a member of staff and a pupil, or between pupils.

13. Education: Measures are taken throughout each year to educate pupils about bullying.

The SMSC Curriculum and Tutor Programme includes courses on bullying covering:

- What is bullying?
- What defines a victim?
- Forms of bullying – physical, emotional, psychological, mental, cyber
- Who bullies whom?
- Defining the anti-bullying policy
- Human rights – everyone has the right not to be bullied

- Bullying – what to do?
- What to do if you feel you are being bullied
- What to do if you witness another being bullied
- No-one deserves it – ever
- To whom can you turn?
- Victim and bully both need help

Anti-Bullying messages are given in assemblies by the House Masters and House Mistresses and the Director of Pastoral Care addresses every year group at the beginning of each term reminding them of the School's approach to any incident of bullying. Anti-Bullying week is also part of the Tutor Programme.

14. Staff training

14.1. Appropriate training in all aspects of care is arranged to ensure that House Masters and House Mistresses and other staff involved in the pastoral management of pupils have the necessary professional skills, especially:

- awareness of the risk and indications of child abuse and bullying, and how to deal with cases;

14.2. And in Houses, ensuring that:

- there is an adequate presence of staff;
- staff are actively involved with pupils in all areas and year groups when they are on duty;
- measures are taken to avoid boredom and lack of purpose among pupils;
- there is space available for pupils' quiet withdrawal;
- there is no crowding in bedrooms or common rooms; and
- good behaviour and discipline is maintained.

15. Pupils' responsibilities

15.1. We emphasise with senior pupils the role which is expected of them in setting a good example and being helpful to younger pupils and each other. Older boarders are encouraged to keep an eye on younger boarders and offer support, where it is needed, and in particular:

- all senior pupils have the opportunity for House duties but senior pupils who do not wish to have extended pastoral responsibilities are not coerced; the responsibilities of senior pupils are appropriately limited;
- members of staff expect School Prefects, House Prefects and Mentors to offer supervisory support; and
- School and House Prefects and Mentors receive training at the beginning of the academic year on how to control younger pupils sensitively.

16. Record Keeping and monitoring

16.1. House Masters and House Mistresses maintain records of the welfare and development

of individual pupils. Every complaint or report of bullying must be entered on MyConcern. The Director of Pastoral Care will then enter the concern on the Bullying Register which is maintained centrally. The Head Master and Deputy Head Master meet with the Director of Pastoral Care to monitor the Bullying Register at the end of each term and report any incidents to the Governor with responsibility for Child Protection.

17. Why incidents might not be reported

17.1. **Victim:** There are many reasons why a pupil who has suffered bullying may be reluctant to report it. S/he may become demoralised and may say, for example:

- it is telling tales. They won't believe me because the person I am complaining about is popular and I am not, and I will become even more unpopular;
- the things they are saying and doing are too embarrassing to discuss with an adult;
- it is all my fault anyway for being overweight/too studious etc.;
- there are too many of them - there is nothing the staff can do;
- it will get back to my parents and they will think less of me;
- I will just try and toughen up and grow a thicker skin; or
- I will lie low and not audition for a part in the School play etc.

17.2. **Witnesses:** There are also reasons why a pupil who has witnessed or learned of bullying behaviour may not want to make a report. S/he may say:

- it is "grassing" and I will become unpopular;
- it is none of my business anyway; or
- I don't like the victim and I would find it embarrassing to be associated with him/her.

17.3. **Culture:** Any of these responses would be contrary to our culture at the School. When we drive and implement this policy we encourage every pupil to understand that:

- every complaint of bullying will be taken seriously;
- members of staff will deal with a complaint correctly and effectively in accordance with their experience and the training they have received;
- there is a solution to nearly every problem of bullying;
- a pupil who complains will receive support and advice and in many cases the problem can be dealt with on a no-names basis; and
- the primary aim will be for the bullying to cease, not the punishment of the bully unless this is necessary

18. Anti-bullying Procedures

Downside School's procedures have been formulated to make it easy to report bullying, including cyber-bullying and bullying outside school. They also give guidance as to the threshold for reporting a bullying issue to external agencies (such as police/children's social care). Records are kept to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted or to enable patterns to be identified; It should be noted that 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.

18.1. Guidelines

18.1.1. The following procedures are a guideline except where expressed in the terms "should" or "must". The best guide is the experience and training of the staff.

18.2. Reporting bullying complaints

18.2.1. **Pupils:** A pupil who is being bullied, or who is worried about another pupil being bullied, should complain without delay and can do so in several ways. S/he can:

- tell his/her parents, his/her House Master/House Mistress, Assistant House Master/House Mistresses, House Parent, Chaplain or a responsible older pupil; alternatively;
- leave a note for their House Master/House Mistress;
- contact the Independent Listener whose details are published on House notice boards and in the Pupil Handbook & Prep Diary, for advice;
- contact a School doctor or a nurse in the Health Centre;
- contact Childline (0800 1111); or
- contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Deputy; or
- Somerset Direct (telephone: 0300 123 2224)

18.2.2. **Parents:** Parents who are concerned that their child is being bullied should inform their child's House Master or House Mistress without delay.

18.2.3. **Staff:** This policy focuses on the bullying of pupils although it is recognised that staff can be the victims of bullying. Staff members who are concerned about being bullied or harassed by pupils report their concerns to the Deputy Head Master or directly to the Head Master.

18.3. **Initial complaint:** A person in authority who learns of alleged bullying behaviour should:

- firstly, respond quickly and sensitively by offering advice, support and reassurance to the alleged victim, then report the allegation to the House Master or House Mistress of the pupil concerned or the Director of Pastoral Care as soon as possible.
- The Director of Pastoral Care must record the complaint in the Bullying Register; and co-ordinate the School's response to the complaint.
- The person in authority should reassure the pupil, but must not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality.

18.4. **Assessment:** The Director of Pastoral Care will normally see the victim and (unless the case is very serious) any witnesses without delay and form an initial view of the allegation. The assessment will consider:

- the nature of the incident/s - physical? verbal? exclusionary? etc.
- is it an "isolated" incident involving an individual or a group?
- is it part of a pattern of behaviour by an individual or a group?

- has physical injury been caused? Who should be informed - Parents? The School's Designated Safeguarding Lead? Social Services? The police?
- can the alleged bully be seen on a no-names basis?
- what is the likely outcome if the complaint proves to be correct?
- At this stage, the possible outcomes for an incident which is not too serious include:
 - there has been a misunderstanding which can be explained sympathetically to the alleged victim with advice to the alleged bully; or
 - the complaint is justified in whole or in part, and further action will be needed (see Range of Action, below).

18.5. **Serious incident:** If the Director of Pastoral Care believes that serious bullying behaviour has recurred after warnings have been given to the "bully" s/he must inform the Head Master and the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) . Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'.

18.5.1. **The DSL** will then:

- interview the alleged victim, bully and any witnesses separately, in order to establish the facts of the case. S/he may decide to ask the Pastoral Supporter to be present, usually the House Master or House Mistress; and
- send a summary of his/her findings to the Head Master and record on MyConcern

18.5.2. The **Head Master** will notify the parents of the victim and bully, giving them details of the case and the action being taken.

18.5.3. **Range of action:** When a complaint is upheld the range of responses will include one or more of the following:

- advice and support for the victim and, where appropriate, establishing a course of action to help the victim;
- advice and support to the bully in trying to change his/her behaviour. This may include clear instructions and a warning or final warning, and involvement of the Chaplain;
- a supervised meeting between the bully and the victim to discuss their differences and the ways in which they may be able to avoid future conflict;
- a disciplinary sanction against the bully, in accordance with the School's Behaviour Policy such as gating, HsMs detention, loss of privileges, additional duties, written work or an act of service to the community. In a very serious case or a case of persistent bullying, a pupil may, after a fair hearing, be required to leave the School permanently in accordance with the School's Exclusions Policy;
- action to break up a "power base";
- moving either the bully or victim to another House after consultation with the pupil, his/her parents and the relevant staff;
- involving Social Services or the police;
- notifying the parents of one or both pupils about the case and the action which has been taken;

- such other action as may appear to the Head Master to be appropriate;
- noting the outcome in the relevant pupil file.

18.5.4. **Monitoring:** The position should be monitored for as long as necessary thereafter.

Action may include:

- sharing information with some or all colleagues and with pupils in the House so that they may be alert to the need to monitor certain pupils closely;
- ongoing counselling and support;
- vigilance;
- Informing relevant staff ;
- reviewing vulnerable individuals and areas of the School;
- liaison between House Masters and/or House Mistresses;

19. Formal complaint

19.1. If the victim or his/her parents are not satisfied with the action taken, they should be advised to make a formal complaint, according to the School's Complaints Procedure.

20. Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy

20.1 Please follow the link to the [Safeguarding Child Protection Policy](#):

21. Review

- 21.1. This policy will be reviewed by the Director of Pastoral Care annually.
- 21.2. This Policy has been created with regard to DfE 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying'. (July 2017)

Authorised by	Chair of the Board of Governing Body
Date	1 December 2018
Next review November 2019	

Effective date of the policy	November 2018
Circulation	[Governors / teaching staff / all staff / parents / pupils [on request]]
Status	Complies with requirements of Part 3 / Paragraph 10 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2018, <i>Boarding schools: National minimum standards</i> (Department for Education (DfE), April 2015 and 2017) and <i>Preventing and tackling bullying</i> (July 2017)