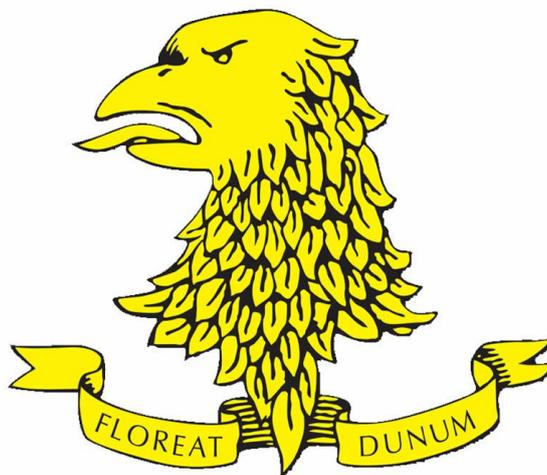


DOWN HIGH SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



“NOTHING ACHIEVED WITHOUT EFFORT”

At Down High School, we believe that through high aspirations, perseverance and commitment every pupil can enjoy school life as they succeed and fulfil their potential. We are committed to promoting wellbeing by providing a safe, caring and supportive environment for every member of our school community. All bullying is wrong. We believe that through our core value of **RESPECT** bullying behaviour can be prevented, challenged, reported and stopped.

Our core value of **RESPECT** means;

<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>We value doing the right thing</i>
<i>Effort</i>	<i>We value trying our best</i>
<i>Success</i>	<i>We value high achievement</i>
<i>Perseverance</i>	<i>We value rising to a challenge</i>
<i>Equality</i>	<i>We value our diversity</i>
<i>Community</i>	<i>We value our positive relationships</i>
<i>Trust</i>	<i>We value each other</i>

Addressing Bullying at Down High School

The prevention of bullying is embedded in both the ethos and curriculum of the school. All members of the school community are informed on a regular basis that any form of bullying is unacceptable and specific opportunities to address the issue of bullying and its harmful

impact on young people are built into the Personal Development programme and curricular subjects. Pupils study the issue of prejudice in a range of subjects and gain valuable insight into the impact intolerance and discrimination has had in society. The topic of bullying is regularly addressed and discussed in forums such as whole school and year Assemblies. The school also participates in the national Anti-Bullying Week.

Anyone can be bullied; however, pupils can be better equipped to deal with potential problems if they develop a strong sense of self-confidence and a range of positive and supportive friendships. Down High seeks, through its curriculum and wide range of extra-curricular activities, to provide pupils with opportunities to engage in activities where self-esteem and personal growth are actively promoted.

It is the entitlement of all pupils to pursue their education in an environment which is safe and free from bullying. Any incidents of bullying, either experienced or witnessed, should be reported. Above all, if any pupils should experience sustained bullying, from whatever source, they should never suffer in silence but confide in someone - a friend, a parent, a teacher. The school has put in place strategies to deal with bullying and will do its best to resolve the situation quickly and sensitively.

While it is entirely right that all schools have an important role to play in dealing effectively with bullying, it is also true that parents have a crucial and central responsibility in this area. Children who understand the importance of sensitivity, tolerance and mutual respect are less likely to engage in sustained bullying.

Defining Bullying

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) defines bullying as the repeated use of power by one or more persons intentionally to hurt, harm or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others. While bullying is a form of negative behaviour that can take place in any community, or sphere of society, its effects on young people are particularly damaging and hinder both their long-term development and academic progress.

Bullying behaviour normally has four main characteristics;

1. Repetitive and persistent
2. Intentionally harmful
3. Involves an imbalance of power, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it
4. Causes distress

Types of Bullying

Physical bullying

Physical bullying includes hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching, jostling, physical intimidation, and pushing or damaging property.

Verbal bullying

Verbal bullying includes name calling, insults, teasing, jokes, threats, spreading rumours.

Social bullying

Social bullying, sometimes referred to as covert bullying, is often harder to recognise and can be carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Social bullying includes:

- lying and spreading rumours
- refusal to work with/ talk to/ play with/ help others
- playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
- mimicking unkindly
- encouraging others to socially exclude someone
- damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance

Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying can be overt or covert bullying behaviours using digital technologies, including hardware such as computers and smartphones, and software such as social media, instant messaging, texts, websites and other online platforms. Cyber bullying can happen at any time. It can be in public or in private and sometimes only known to the target and the person bullying. Cyber bullying can include:

- Abusive or hurtful texts emails or posts, images or videos
- Deliberately excluding others online
- Nasty gossip or rumours
- Imitating others online or using their log-in

Prejudice Based Bullying

Some forms of prejudice based bullying include:

- Disability – related to perceived or actual disability
- Homophobic – related to perceived or actual sexual orientation
- Transphobic Bullying- When a child or young person experiences bullying because of their real or perceived gender identity
- Racist – related to skin colour, culture and religion
- Sectarian – related to religious belief and/or political opinion

Signs of Bullying

Because of its often covert and surreptitious nature, bullying can prove difficult to detect. This problem is compounded by the fact that many victims feel frightened to report it. Often, it may take place outside the normal range of teacher observation. All staff, parents and pupils should be aware of warning signs and significant changes in pupil behaviour. These signs may not necessarily indicate bullying but should be reported.

Emotional and behavioural signs of bullying

- Changes in sleep patterns
- Changes in eating patterns
- Frequent tears or anger
- Mood swings
- Feels ill in the morning
- Becomes withdrawn or starts stammering
- Becomes aggressive and unreasonable
- Refuses to talk about what is wrong
- Begins to target siblings
- Continually 'loses' money or starts stealing.

Physical signs of bullying

- Has unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches
- Comes home with missing or damaged belongings or clothes
- Comes home hungry.

School signs of bullying

- Refusal to go to school
- Changes in their route to school
- Doesn't want to go to school on the bus
- A change of personality and behaviour
- Changing patterns of academic performance
- Often alone or excluded from friendship groups at school
- A frequent target for teasing, mimicking or ridicule at school
- Unable to speak up in class and appears insecure or frightened
- Frequent visits to the sick bay
- Coming to school late or hanging around at the end of school

Preventing and dealing with bullying type behaviour

Staff will:

- Promote the core school value of **RESPECT**, including self-respect and respect for others

- Be aware and alert to the signs of bullying and the impact that bullying behaviour can have on young people
- Promote positive behaviour and challenge unacceptable behaviour
- Respond sensitively to a young person who has been bullied and act promptly by reporting any concerns to the pupil's Head of Year who will investigate
- Refrain from any action or language towards a pupil that can be seized on by others to become a basis of bullying

We expect our pupils to:

- Be aware of what bullying is and understand the very harmful effects it can have on young people
- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying behaviour
- Value diversity and contribute to the very positive relationships that exist within the school community
- Show sensitivity, tolerance and mutual respect towards other pupils
- To do the right thing and report to a member of staff any instances of bullying behaviour

Anyone who becomes the target of bullying behaviour should not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:

- Talking to your child about the different types of bullying and why bullying is wrong
- Encouraging your child to develop and sustain positive relations with their peers
- Stressing the importance of sensitivity, tolerance and mutual respect
- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their child, which might be evidence of bullying.
- Explain the importance of reporting any bullying behaviour to their Head of Year
- Advising your child not to retaliate violently to any form of bullying behaviour.
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards your child and reassure them that appropriate action will be taken.
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying behaviour

Responding to Bullying

Those who experience bullying are often frightened of the consequences of reporting it and both parents and teachers need to encourage those who are victims of such behaviour to speak-out, in the assurance that they will receive a supportive and sympathetic response. Part of this initial response is to reassure and begin the repair and restoration of self-confidence. An investigation into the details and circumstances will be carried out by the Head of Year.

Procedure for dealing with Bullying related incidents

Once an alleged bullying incident has been referred to a Head of Year the following procedures should be followed:

1. Gather and clarify the facts.
2. Check that the behaviour constitutes bullying behaviour and determine the level of severity.

To determine the level of severity, the Head of Year should take account of the following:

- The nature of the bullying behaviour- for example deliberate teasing, excluding or hitting. There is a tendency among those who have a duty of care to rate some bullying, particularly violence, as more serious than other subtle forms.
- The frequency of the bullying behaviour: daily, weekly or less often.
- The duration of the bullying behaviour: whether over a short or longer periods of time.
- The perceptions of the child being bullied – The seriousness of bullying should be measured by the degree of distress suffered by the target.

3. Based on this initial assessment choose an appropriate intervention(s) The main aim of any intervention is to **RESPOND** to the bullying that is taking place, **RESOLVE** the concern and **RESTORE** the well-being of all those involved.

Interventions may include;

- Explain the inappropriateness of the behaviour in line with the school's values.
- Identify possible consequences if the bullying behaviour continues, including sanctions outlined in the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy.
- Point out the level of distress experienced by the bullied pupil.
- Talk with the pupil being bullied to explore whether he/she has in any way provoked the bullying behaviour and help establish mechanisms to make this less likely in the future.
- Help the bullied pupil to identify ways in which he/she may be strengthened and supported, e.g. peer support.
- Encourage reparation to be made, if appropriate.
- Monitor the situation carefully.
- Interventions with a higher response level may be required if the situation persists or deteriorates. This may include individual or group restorative meetings.

Ensure effective communication amongst all parties. Consider the possible need for:

- Parental involvement
- Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) involvement
- Risk assessment
- External agency involvement e.g. the Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSS).

4. Monitor and evaluate the on-going effectiveness of your chosen intervention/strategy.

5. **Keep a written record of actions taken and outcomes achieved.**

6. Review the outcomes with Head of Section/Pastoral VP to determine whether further action is required.

Implementing the above process will provide opportunities for self-reflection, development and learning for all parties concerned, resulting in the effective management of bullying incidents. This reflection should inform and guide the on-going review and development of the school's anti-bullying policy, procedures and practice. Due to the potentially wide range of circumstances and contexts involved in bullying incidents, professional experience acknowledges that there is no one single response that can be universally applied to every situation. However, the overriding aim of any response is always to protect the victim and end the bullying.

Down High has a clear commitment to tackling the problem of bullying should it arise and is also committed to dealing with it in an open and professional manner. The school shall continue to review its policies and approaches and seek to develop the professional training of its staff in its desire to provide a supportive and safe environment for all its pupils. All those who work in the school, in whatever capacity, have received training in Safeguarding and Child Protection and are aware of the signs of bullying and the harmful effect bullying can have on young people.

It must also be stressed that all staff, as well as pupils, are entitled to work in an environment free from any form of harassment or bullying. Pupils should show respect for their person, property and privacy outside school. If members of staff feel that they have been the victims of such behaviour they should report it to the Principal.

GMK (September 2017)