DITCHAM PARK SCHOOL

Where every child is known and valued

Anti-Bullying Policy

Compiled by	Head of Juniors / Head of Seniors
Approved by	Education Comm
Date of Publication	January 2020
This Review	Autumn 2025
Next Review	Autumn 2026

INTRODUCTION

This policy relates to all pupils at Ditcham Park School, including the EYFS.

Our school ethos**, Where Every Child is known and Valued**, directs our commitment to providing an environment that is friendly, safe and where relationships are built on respect.

Bullying is a breach of our ethos as well of our rules. Bullying is not tolerated in any form at Ditcham Park School.

RELATED POLICIES

This policy follows the guidelines outlined in the non-statutory DfE advice *'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2017).* It also reflects the guidance in *'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2024).*

The following policies, procedures and resource materials are also relevant to the school's anti-bullying policy:

(a) Behaviour Policy

(b) Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

(c) Online Safety Policy

(d) Online Safety Policy

(e) Whistleblowing Policy

(f) School Ethos

(g) Educational/External Visits Policy

These policies are available on the school's website and hard copies are available on request.

DEFINITIONS

Bullying is behaviour by any pupil, which may be repeated over time and which intentionally hurts, threatens, frightens, humiliates or undermines another pupil or group.

Bullying may take many forms, including:

- physical (e.g. any threat of or use of violence of any kind)
- sexual (e.g. the sharing of nudes/semi-nudes)
- verbal (e.g. cyberbullying via social media, gaming, or other instant messages, and can include the use of images and video)
- emotional (e.g. by excluding, being sarcastic, name-calling, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours).

Bullying can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone, or actions that fall short of direct participation, where someone encourages others to bully, or joins in with laughing at a victim. Bullying is often hidden and subtle.

In addition, the (repeated) abuse of property, or the deliberate and (repeated) isolation or exclusion of an individual is bullying behaviour. Bullying almost always involves a difference in power between those instigating the bullying and the person being bullied. This is particularly so when the behaviour is directed towards someone who is younger, weaker (mentally or physically) or socially less confident or where there is the capacity to socially isolate other pupils.

Not all bullying is deliberate or intended to hurt. Some individuals may see their hurtful conduct as ‘teasing’ or ‘banter’. These forms of bullying are equally unacceptable but may not be malicious and can often be corrected quickly with advice and without disciplinary sanctions. It is worth acknowledging the distinction between *behaviour which is bullying* and *a bully*.

Bullying can sometimes amount to child-on-child abuse, which is defined as any kind of physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse or coercive control exercised between children/young people both on and offline by one or more pupils against another pupil. It can be standalone or as part of wider abuse and can happen both inside and outside of school, and online. Further information about child-on-child abuse, including the procedures to follow when an incident on child-on-child abuse is reported can be found in the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups with protected characteristics, which may include:

- bullying related to race, religion, faith and belief and for those without faith
- bullying related to ethnicity, nationality or culture
- bullying related to Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND)
- bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic/biphobic bullying)
- gender based bullying, including transphobic bullying
- bullying against teenage parents (pregnancy and maternity under the Equality Act)
- bullying related to the marital arrangements of a child's parents, or a child who adopted or a child who is a career
- bullying related to age, whether this be a pupil's age (possibly out of year) or the age of a parent
- bullying related to someone's sex, e.g. misogynistic bullying.

Bullying may be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. For example, bullying can still be homophobic if directed towards a child that is perceived to be gay, whether or not this is the case.

The school does not tolerate peer-group 'initiation ceremonies' or hazing-type violence or rituals designed to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation to pupils. All staff remain alert to such actions.

Any incident where bullying is suspected (or if there is reasonable cause to suspect a pupil is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm), will be considered as a potential safeguarding concern **(further details can be found in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures)**. If there is a safeguarding concern, the matter will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Child Protection. The DSL/DDSL in turn will liaise with relevant staff to ensure that all pupils involved with bullying receive the appropriate support, in-line with school policy. If there is a safeguarding issue, then the procedures in the Safeguarding policy will be followed.

Some bullying behaviour may fall within the definitions of the legal offences of harassment or threatening behaviour. The school has a legal duty to report such instances of bullying to Children's Social Services or/and the police.

EDUCATION

The school promotes the expectation that pupils treat each other with respect at all times, both inside and outside of school.

We work to reduce the threat of bullying through effective education. Our PSHE curriculum, pastoral systems and behaviour policies emphasise the right of all pupils to be able to learn in an atmosphere of tolerance, care and respect.

Pupils are encouraged to discuss bullying and recognise its harmful effects as well as to consider strategies that might be employed to help develop resilience and appropriate responses to bullying behaviours. Our pupils are taught to understand and appreciate diversity between people through discussion of British Fundamental Values and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language.

Both junior and senior parts of the school complete an anti-bullying survey each year. The information produced by these surveys is used to inform all aspects of our anti-bullying education. We engage fully with the national anti-bullying campaign each year, using its momentum for our work in PSHE and assemblies. We also include Safer Internet Day in our curriculum planning, and use CEOP resources with our pupils, staff and parents.

All pupils (including EYFS pupils) are briefed thoroughly on the school's expected standards of behaviour. Pupils are told what they should do if they encounter bullying. Any pupil who reports bullying in good faith will be taken seriously, supported and kept safe.

The school buildings display advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and websites where they can connect with external specialists, such as ChildLine, Kidscape, Bullying UK, and the Samaritans.

BULLYING – GUIDANCE GIVEN TO PUPILS

It is the responsibility of all pupils in our community to take action if they see, hear or suspect that bullying is taking place, or if they become aware that any member of the school community has been involved in bullying. Every pupil has the right to live their life at school without being bullied. All pupils are expected to be 'upstanders' rather than bystanders.

Pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff if they are being bullied, or if they know or suspect that bullying is taking place. They are reassured that they will be taken seriously and will be supported and kept safe.

Pupils are told that whilst all staff have a responsibility to respond to bullying in school, there are particular people in school to whom pupils may turn for support and guidance on any issue about which they feel concern. These are:

- form tutor/class teacher
- the wellbeing co-ordinator – Juliette Barnes
- the Designated Safeguarding Leads – Pippa Probert and Kate Senior
- Heads of Year (years 7-11)
- Mental Health First Aiders

Pupils, particularly older ones, such as prefects, have an important role in promoting good behaviour and combatting bullying by offering a good example. **(for more detail see Behaviour Policy).**

All pupils are expected to treat those around them with respect and consideration. Anyone who perpetrates bullying behaviour should expect to have this behaviour challenged. In addition to sanctions which may be necessary, any pupil involved in perpetrating bullying behaviour will be supported by staff to understand that their actions are wrong.

BULLYING – STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

The school is committed to providing a nurturing, safe and happy environment where all pupils can flourish. As such, reporting of incidents and where necessary, whistleblowing, is encouraged.

All members of staff are expected to be vigilant in ensuring that instances of bullying are dealt with as soon as they are witnessed or reported; this includes cyberbullying and bullying outside school. Staff must not accept 'banter' as an excuse for what may be bullying.

If a staff member is made aware of an incident of bullying, they should:

- listen to the pupil's concern and take any allegations seriously
- reassure him/her that their concern will be taken seriously
- avoid asking leading questions which might prejudice any later legal action that could become necessary
- avoid giving any guarantee of confidentiality in case matters need to go further
- record relevant details under the 'Bullying' tag on CPOMS which will ensure that it is reported to the DSLs.

The school recognises that a first disclosure to a trusted adult may only be the first incident reported. It is not necessarily representative of a singular incident.

Staff will take all reports seriously regardless of how long it has taken for the child to come forward. Staff will act immediately and will support those who have been bullied when they raise a concern.

The Head of Seniors or Juniors will decide who will take responsibility for continuing investigations of any reported incidents. Pupils may be spoken to in order to ascertain what happened. Written statements may be required from all parties involved. These will be signed and dated.

The school will keep parents of those impacted by bullying, informed about any ongoing investigation and outcome. Details of this communication will be recorded on CPOMS.

A pupil's tutor or class teacher, will monitor the situation closely. If no improvement is seen, then the Head of Seniors/Juniors may implement further sanctions or employ other strategies to resolve the situation.

Where an issue of pupil behaviour or bullying gives 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm', staff will follow the procedures set out in the School's Child Protection Policy.

The school recognises that certain children may be more at risk of bullying than others and may require additional support when dealing with an incident of bullying, for example children with SEND and/or certain health conditions, and LGBTQ+ pupils. The school will ensure that staff receive appropriate training to be able to understand the specific needs of our pupils, and to enable all staff to provide an inclusive environment for all pupils.

Staff will always consider the motive behind bullying behaviour and whether it raises any concerns for the welfare of the pupils who are perpetrating this behaviour. If staff reasonably suspect that a pupil may be suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, they should follow the procedures set out in the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and discuss their concerns with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL/DDSL) without delay.

Staff are always on duty at times during break and lunchtimes and are aware of the need to remain alert to the possibility of bullying taking place. Estate staff and administrative staff should also be observant of pupil behaviours that may suggest bullying and must report it to relevant teaching staff.

Upon induction, all new members of staff are given training and guidance on the school's anti-bullying policy and on how to react to, and record allegations of bullying at the school, including cyberbullying. The school will ensure that all school staff understand: the principles of the school's policy; the school's legal responsibilities; actions to be taken to resolve and prevent incidents of bullying from arising or escalating; and also details of sources of further support.

SANCTIONS AND SUPPORT

The school recognises that support may be required for the perpetrator of bullying as well as for any pupil on the receiving end of bullying. It also recognises that incidents of bullying are often complex and nuanced. The school endeavours to move carefully and sensitively through investigative processes before employing sanctions.

A restorative process may be used, if it is deemed an appropriate response. Clear guidelines for future behaviour will be issued to both parties. Pupils will know that the situation will be monitored and know of consequences for those involved in bullying should it continue.

Sanctions applied and management approaches adopted will depend on the seriousness of an incident. Sanctions will be more severe for repeated offences or extreme examples of bullying. The full range of sanctions that are available to the school may be used in dealing with pupils who have been involved in bullying. These are laid out in the **Behaviour Policy.**

All sanctions imposed should be proportional to the circumstances of the case and the pupil's age **(see Behaviour Policy).** In assessing the proportionate nature of the sanction, due regard should be made to: the offence committed; the age of the pupil; any religious requirements affecting the pupil; or SEND concerns that they may have. Adjustments may be made where a pupil with a SEND is involved. Where the pupil's needs warrant it appropriate, the SENCOs may be consulted to ensure the process and sanction are appropriate.

Given that bullying can have a serious detrimental effect on the pupil being bullied and on the school community more widely, it should be recognised that a pupil may face exclusion for bullying and that this serious punishment can be applied even to a first occurrence and irrespective of the pupil's school record.

A pupil who persistently makes life unhappy for others will be referred to the Headmaster and may face suspension from school. In extreme cases, a pupil may be asked to leave the school.

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; online; or that otherwise occur outside of school. The school has the right to take disciplinary measures in respect of such incidents.

MONITORING

Following an instance of bullying, action may include:

- sharing information with some or all colleagues, and with pupils in the year group so that all relevant pupils and staff are alert to the situation
- on-going pastoral/wellbeing support for all pupils involved
- reviewing areas of the school where bullying is more likely to occur and adapt provision as needed (eg: staff directed to duty 'hotspots' / alternative provision and spaces during unstructured times)

All incidents of bullying, or alleged bullying, are discussed and reviewed at the weekly pastoral meetings (for Seniors on Tuesday mornings and for Juniors on Monday afternoons).

Both junior and senior parts of the school complete an anti-bullying survey each year. The information produced by these surveys is used to inform all aspects of our anti-bullying education.

Records of bullying recorded on CPOMS will be reviewed on a termly basis by the Safeguarding Sub Committee who will look for unresolved incidents or patterns of behaviour that may suggest the need for further work or training. Incidents of serious bullying, resulting in suspension or exclusion, will be reported by the Headmaster to the governing body.

INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

We encourage parents to work with the school to support pupils impacted by bullying. We actively encourage parents to bring to the school's attention any behaviour which negatively impacts the wellbeing of any pupil. This is irrespective of whether this behaviour occurs within the school grounds, in school 'hours' or not.

Parents are asked to refrain from engaging in conversation with other parents about such matters.

Parent may not always recognise when their child is impacted by bullying. However, changes in a child's presentation, manner, behaviour and general state of health can sometimes be an indicator of this. Encourage your child to talk about their experiences. Be patient; it is quite natural for him/her to find it difficult to talk about bullying, and not to want you to do anything about it for fear it will make the situation worse. Listen and try not to interrupt. Reassure your child that you are sympathetic and that it is a problem that can be solved. It happens to most people at some time. Encourage your child to talk to their class teacher (Juniors) or tutor (Seniors) about the matter. Parents should feel free to contact their child's class teacher (Juniors) or tutor (Seniors) to discuss the matter if they are concerned.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Parents are encouraged to use our complaints procedure (published on our website) if they feel that any concerns about bullying are not being properly addressed.

POLICY ON CYBER-BULLYING – please see Online Safety Policy