

DALRIADA SCHOOL

POLICY DOCUMENT



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



**Bullying is wrong,
harmful and unacceptable.**

Dalriada School is determined to do everything possible to prevent bullying and to counteract the effects of bullying.

DEFINITION

In this policy statement bullying is taken to mean the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. It is a persistent and repeated activity which can be carried out by individuals or groups and can take a variety of forms.

Some of these forms are listed below:

Physical

- Hitting, striking or kicking
- Stealing, hiding or damaging property

Verbal

- Name-calling, teasing, use of sarcasm and/or ridicule, rumour-spreading, threatening, use of coercion

Indirect Or Emotional

- Deliberately excluding and/or ignoring of victim, Giving nasty looks
- Threatening or insulting gestures
- Cyber Bullying (“The use of Information and Communications Technology, particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else” Department for Children, Schools and Families “Cyber Bullying – Safe to Learn”)

Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence in UK law, there are criminal laws that can apply in terms of harassment or threatening behaviour. This is particularly pertinent for Cyber Bullying. (*See Appendix 1*) The school may involve external agencies as the need arises.

Some bullying, including cyber bullying is deliberate and aggressive, but it is important to realise that some incidents of Cyber Bullying are known to be unintentional and the result of simply not thinking about the consequences. In Cyber Bullying bystanders can become perpetrators.

ACTION TO PREVENT BULLYING

Pastoral care

In line with its aims, the school will continue to develop its Pastoral Care programme and use strategies which promote fairness and tolerance, while setting high standards of respect, self-discipline, commitment and generosity.

Classroom management

In line with the school’s positive behaviour policy, teachers will continue to provide suitable role models by:

- Creating a positive, well ordered environment within which each pupil feels valued and respected
- Promoting pupil confidence and self esteem
- Encouraging pupils to value one another
- Promoting self discipline and a healthy respect for authority among pupils.

Curriculum

The school will continue to provide opportunities through the curriculum to raise awareness of bullying in a variety of subjects and programmes, including:

- The Pastoral Care programme which is delivered through tutor groups and assemblies
- Religious Education
- Learning for Life and Work
- ICT (Cyber Bullying)

GUIDANCE FOR STAFF, SUPERVISORS AND PREFECTS

- If you suspect a case of bullying report it immediately to the appropriate Form Tutor or Head of School or a Deputy Head or the Headmaster.
- When you report it is very important that all the relevant information is given accurately and quickly.
- Be alert to potential bullying related incidents and be aware of the importance of detecting them early and passing on the appropriate information to the Form Tutor, Head of School or Deputy Head.
- The pertinent details, observations and actual words spoken should be recorded in writing as soon as possible. This may include keeping electronic messages and other materials.

GUIDANCE FOR STAFF INVESTIGATING A BULLYING INCIDENT

The staff who investigate bullying incidents are likely to be Form Teachers, Heads of School and/or the Deputy Head (Pastoral). However other teachers with particular knowledge, skills or experience may well be involved and the Headmaster will be kept informed and may

participate. In any event the following points are used to establish the basic principles underpinning such an investigation:

- Normally two members of staff will be present when a pupil is being interviewed and notes of the interview will be made and recorded in a factual and objective manner.
- When there is evidence that a pupil has engaged in bullying behaviour he or she will be told in clear terms that this behaviour is utterly unacceptable. (Note that disapproval of the anti-social behaviour will be expressed **NOT** disapproval of the person.)
- The parents will be informed and may well be asked to come to school to discuss the matter.
- Consultation will take place with the Head of School/Deputy Head/Headmaster to determine an appropriate course of action.

GUIDANCE FOR PUPILS

This section has been written in the knowledge that bullying is a complex problem. **You must realise that there may be no easy answer that makes all your problems go away instantly.** However we recognise that bullying survives in secrecy and often the first step towards a solution is to bring it out into the open. We know that bullying problems rarely "sort themselves out" but that opening the situation up is a step in the right direction. The following points are made with this in mind.

- If you are being bullied it is very important to tell someone about it.
- Talk to your parents, a teacher, a prefect or a school friend.
- Avoid times and places when and where you feel you might be bullied. This is not "running-away" but is common sense!
- Keep evidence of offensive text messages and/or material posted on the web.
- General advice will be provided through the LLW and ICT programmes which will also provide opportunities for useful class discussion of bullying issues.
- Ask your form teachers for some useful literature. There are a number of publications now available and these can be obtained through the school.
- Read the rest of this anti-bullying policy carefully. It will show you that your concerns will be taken seriously and that once you tell someone then the school will take action.

(See Appendix 2)

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

No school can reasonably claim to be free from bullying therefore if your child talks to you about being bullied we advise you to take it seriously. However, since victims of bullying often have feelings of shame and/or embarrassment that make it difficult to talk you may become aware of bullying through less obvious means. If your child is showing signs of distress and is, for example, unwilling to attend school or to travel certain routes, or consistently has articles damaged or stolen, then it **may** indicate that bullying is going on. In any case we suggest that you act in accordance with the following principles:

- If you suspect your child is being bullied inform the school at once by telephoning the school office and asking to speak to your child's Form Tutor, Head of School, Deputy Head or Headmaster.
- When you contact the school, give as much detail as you can. Be aware that there is likely to be no quick and easy answer but if you contact the school you will be taken seriously and that a full investigation will begin.
- We also recommend that you try to stay calm and to talk things through with your son or daughter. A sympathetic and supportive approach that concentrates first on listening to what the child has to say does most good. Exhortations for pupils to stand up for themselves are usually unhelpful. On no account should pupils resort to physical violence to counter bullying.
- Encourage your child to talk to a teacher about the problem and try to prepare him or her to play a full part in the school's investigation of the situation which will inevitably involve interviews of pupils by staff.
- When victims of bullying are identified they will be offered support and reassured that no blame attaches to them. However they may also be made aware that there are ways to help, avoid and respond to bullying that they may have to develop and put into practice, with appropriate guidance and support.
- The victim's parents will be fully informed and involved in discussions with school staff. It may be appropriate to utilise external agencies, with parental consent, to provide part of the counselling and support for the victim.

ADVICE TO PARENTS OF BULLIES

- The pupil's personal file will be annotated and appropriate sanctions taken, taking into account the circumstances and the pupil's school record. (Examples of sanctions are listed in the School's Behaviour Management Policy).
- A written assurance of future good behaviour will be asked for and retained in the pupil's personal file and both the bully and the parents will be made aware of the potentially serious consequences of any repetition of the behaviour.
- It may be appropriate to offer advice and guidance on how to avoid being a bully, and with the consent of the parents, to utilise the services of the school's educational psychologist or other outside agencies.

Useful Publications

From **KIDSCAPE**,

152 Buckingham Palace Road, London. SW1W 9TR

- *Stop Bullying*
- *You can beat bullying! A guide for Young People*

From **ABC (Anti-Bullying Campaign)**

18 Elmgate Gardens, Edgware, Middlesex. HA8 9R7

- *Fact sheets for parents of children who are victims of bullying*

From **D. Tattum & G. Herbert**,

Sall Glamorgan Institute of Higher Education,
Cyncoed Road, Cardiff. CF2 6XD

- *Bullying! A Positive Response*

Useful Telephone Numbers

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| Childline | 0800 1111 |
| Youthline | 0808 8088000 |
| NSPCC | 0800 800500 |

These calls are free, and they will not show up on your telephone bill.

Useful Internet Addresses

<http://niabf.org.uk>
<http://www.childline.org.uk>
<http://www.bullying.co.uk>
<http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk>

Links to other school policies

This policy is linked to the school policies on:

- Child Protection
- Health and Safety
- Behaviour Management
- Use of Reasonable Force
- Internet Acceptable Use
- Mobile Phones

These policies help to create a safe and caring environment in which effective teaching and learning can take place.

Review of this Policy

This policy will be reviewed in consultation with pupils, staff and parents as required to ensure it is fit for purpose. An integral part of this process will be a yearly review by the Pastoral Team.

See Appendices 1 and 2 attached

Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence in UK law, there are criminal laws that can apply in terms of harassment or threatening behaviour. For example – and particularly pertinent for Cyber Bullying – threatening and menacing communications. Some Cyber Bullying activities could be criminal activities under a range of different laws.

- **Protection from Harassment Act 1997:** This Act is relevant for incidents that have happened repeatedly (i.e. on more than two occasions). Section 1 prohibits behaviour amounting to harassment of another. Section 2 provides a criminal offence and Section 3 provides a civil remedy for breach of the prohibition on harassment in Section 1. Section 4 provides a more serious offence of someone causing another person to fear, on at least two occasions, that violence will be used against them. A civil court may grant an injunction to restrain a person from conduct which amounts to harassment and, following conviction of an offence under Section 2 or 4, restraining orders are available to protect the victim of the offence.
- **Communications Act 2003.** Section 127 covers all forms of public communications, and subsection (1) defines an offence of sending a ‘grossly offensive, obscene, indecent or menacing’ communication. Subsection (2) defines a separate offence where for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety, a person sends a message which that person knows to be false (or causes it to be sent) or persistently make use of a public communications system.
- **Malicious Communications Act 1988:** Section 1 makes it an offence to send an indecent, grossly offensive or threatening letter, electronic communication or other article to another person with the intention that it should cause them distress or anxiety.
- **Public Order Act 1986:** Section 5 makes it an offence to, with the intent to cause harassment, alarm and distress, use threatening, abusive or insulting words, behaviour, writing, signs or other visual representation within the sight or hearing of a person likely to be caused harassment, alarm or distress. This offence may apply where a mobile phone is used as a camera or video rather than where speech, writing or images are transmitted.
- **Obscene Publications Act 1959:** It is an offence under this Act to publish an obscene article. Publishing includes circulating, showing, playing or projecting the article or transmitting that data for example over a school intranet. An obscene article is one whose effect is such as to tend to deprave and corrupt persons who are likely to read, see or hear the matter contained or embodied in it.
- When cyber bullying takes the form of hacking into someone else’s account, then other criminal laws come in to play, such as the **Computer Misuse Act 1990**, in addition to civil laws on confidentiality privacy.
- **Defamation:** Defamation is a civil “common law” tort in respect of which the Defamation Acts of 1952 and 1996 provide certain defences. It applies to any published material that damages the reputation of an individual or an organisation, and it includes material published on the internet. Where defamatory material is posted on a website the person affected can inform the host of its contents and ask the host to remove it. Once the host knows that the material is there and that it may be defamatory, it can no longer rely on the defence of innocent dissemination in the Defamation Act 1996.

Taken from “Cyber Bullying: Safe to Learn” DCSF 2007

The following is advice for pupils on how to avoid Cyber Bullying through different media.

Text/Video Messaging

- Don't reply to text messaging or video messaging that is abusive or obscene. Your mobile service provider e.g. Orange, O2, Vodafone, etc. should have a number that you can ring to report abusive messaging; try their websites for details.
- Don't delete the message. If the problem continues you can show the messages to a parent or other responsible adult who may be able to help you do something about it.
- Be careful who you give your phone numbers to and don't leave your mobile lying around when you are not there.

Chatrooms or Instant Messaging (IM)

- Do not give out personal information.
- Give yourself an alias that does not give out anything about your age, gender or location.
- Don't respond to abusive posting – ignore them or log off. If you don't take time out and calm down you'll end up writing something you'll regret which will only make the situation worse.
- Think about what you write – it is very easy for people to get the wrong idea about what you write or how you write it.

Email

- If you receive a nasty or abusive email, don't reply. If it's from someone you think you know, like someone at school, they'll want some kind of reaction, just like they would if they were standing in front of you and bullying you. Don't give them the satisfaction of replying, and they'll probably stop.
- If they don't stop then you need to find out where the email is coming from. Using an email client like Outlook or Outlook Express, clicking the right mouse button over an email will reveal lots of details about where and who the email came from. You can then get your parents to contact the school or the service provider of the sender of the email.
- The email can also come from people you don't know, (known as spamming) – email addresses are fairly easy for companies to obtain on the internet using software called email harvesters. They are also surprisingly easy for specialist computer programs to guess. Under no circumstances should you reply to these types of email, even if they have a click here and stop receiving this email link – this will just confirm your email address as a real one. The individual sending it can then sell or pass it on to other people and you'll be flooded with even more junk and abusive emails.
- You can delete the emails, but if the situation becomes serious you should save them or print them off so that, if you do need to take action, you have some evidence.
- Learn more about your email program from the Help menu – you should be able to find details of how you can create folders, email filters and folder routing. This won't stop the emails but it can help to shield you from them.

Web

- If the cyber bullying is on a school or community website, do as you would do if the bullying was face to face – tell someone like your parents or teachers.
- If it's on a site that you don't know about, you have to do a bit of research to find out who hosts the site.

Adapted from <http://www.kidscape.org.uk/cyberbullying/cyberbullying.shtml>

Approved by Board of Governors 30/03/11