



Devonshire House Preparatory School

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Serving North London Families

Devonshire House is a co-educational prep school, offering unparalleled preparation for senior school and life thereafter. Our unwavering emphasis on individual growth, within an inclusive community, balances traditional values and modern practice to inspire fearless life-long learning.

Our school values are:

- **Growth** – we reach high
- **Courage** – we learn fearlessly
- **Wonder** – we are inspired to find our spark
- **Belonging** – we care and come together

Devonshire House Prep School is committed to providing a safe, caring, and respectful environment where every pupil can learn and thrive. Bullying in any form (physical, verbal, emotional, or online) is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

We believe that all members of our school community have the right to feel valued and secure. Any allegations of bullying will be taken seriously, investigated promptly, and addressed in line with our behaviour and safeguarding procedures.

Through education, open communication, and positive role modelling, we aim to foster a culture of kindness, respect, and inclusion where pupils support one another and celebrate diversity.



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Aims and Objectives

At Devonshire House, we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Every student has the right to be safe and happy in school and to be protected when they are feeling vulnerable.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. When bullying occurs, all pupils should be able to tell someone and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

The purpose of this policy is to inform all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, parents and pupils what bullying is, how seriously we take it and the school procedures when bullying is reported. Pupils and parents are assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported. Staff awareness is raised by regular discussion and training. The school is committed to taking action to reduce the rise of bullying at times and places where it is most likely.

Definition

The Department for Education (DfE) defines bullying as 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 or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Bullying can take many forms:

- Cultural - discriminating on the grounds of a person's background or different views
- Cyber - the use of Information Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else, sexting.
- Disability - discriminating due to someone's physical or mental disability
- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Homophobic - because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Religious - discriminating on the grounds of a person's religious beliefs
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Sexist - targeting another for being a member of a particular gender - impacting on the individual person and on all men and women
- Social Isolation - behaviour leading to social isolation, including gossip spreading gossip and encouraging others to ignore another
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, 'banter' or similar hurtful exchange of comments.



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The seriousness of bullying

Bullying is unacceptable in any form and the School will always respond to concerns and take appropriate action.

The impact of bullying, both physical and emotional, can have extremely serious consequences for a child, including psychological damage and loss of self-esteem.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; the Head will make his own judgement about each specific case.

It is important to note that Peer on Peer abuse is not tolerated in any form. Abusive comments and interactions will not be tolerated by the school or passed off as banter, fun or part of growing up.

Some signs and symptoms

A pupil may indicate by signs or patterns of behaviour that he/ she is being bullied.

He /she may;

- become frightened of walking to or from school
- be unwilling to go to school
- feel ill in the morning and complain of tummy headaches
- begin to do poorly in school work
- become withdrawn, start stammering
- regularly have books or clothes destroyed or stolen
- become distressed, stop eating, overeat
- cry easily or have nightmares
- become tired and listless due to inability to sleep
- become disruptive or aggressive
- have possessions go 'missing'
- be frightened to say what is wrong
- have frequent injuries and unexplained bruises
- run away
- self-harm

These signs and behaviour traits could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered as a possibility and should be investigated.

Procedure to follow when bullying is reported

The Procedure for dealing with any incident of poor behaviour is detailed in the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy. Should an investigation into an alleged bullying incident be found not to be bullying, then this does not mean that the incident is closed. It will be dealt with under the Behaviour and Discipline Policy.



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a) Threshold

So that it is easy to report bullying, including cyber-bullying and bullying outside school, the threshold for reporting a bullying issue to external agencies is taken following consultation with the SLT with further advice from DfE (<https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school/reporting-bullying>).

Records are kept to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted or to enable patterns to be identified. 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. In this case it is important to seek advice from the local authority before conducting any form of investigation.

Children are often very reluctant to 'tell' on their friends and classmates and victims of bullying can be particularly reluctant to come forward. Although this is addressed in the PSHEE Programme and in assemblies, teachers must be vigilant at all times and report a bullying incident, including cyber-bullying and bullying outside school, or any concerns they may have about a child to the Head immediately.

b) Form Teachers

A Form Teacher is best placed to talk to a child who is displaying any symptoms of being bullied or about whom they have concerns. They should first report their concerns to the Deputy Head Pastoral and discuss the best course of action. The conversation with the child should take place in a familiar place, which could be the classroom, but with no other children present and without the likelihood of interruption. However, the teacher should take sensible steps to protect themselves from allegations (see Safeguarding Policy).

c) Parents

Parents may be the first to notice symptoms that their child is being bullied and may report their concerns to the Head. Parents will be told about the School procedures, including support for the child.

The annual survey of parents' opinion can be a very useful indicator of concerns or trends, and open door policies and staff presence every day on the playground ensure there is opportunity for parents to speak to teachers. However, great care should be taken that the term 'bullying' is not used out of context or incorrectly. Children can find life in a large community quite hard and do not always behave as we may wish. It is bullying if the intention is to hurt another, either physically or emotionally.

Where bullying is identified, support is offered to both the parents of the identified bullies and the victim in terms of what they can do to help their child. This is important in particular in cases of on-line bullying which often takes place outside school.

d) Head

It is the responsibility of the Head to implement the school anti-bullying strategy and it is important that all concerns about bullying are reported to him immediately. The Head works closely with the Deputy Heads, who have responsibility for the day to day running of the School, and the Deputy Heads may assist the Head in the investigation of any incident.

Once a case of bullying has been reported, the Deputy Head will discuss the matter with the victim's Form Teacher and decide on the course of action in order to ascertain the facts. The Form Teacher will ask the child to talk to the Deputy Head and will be present



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during the interview.

The Deputy Head may need to interview other children, including the alleged perpetrator. It may be that asking older children to write down their account of an incident is helpful in getting a clear picture of an incident, and frees the children from the fear of 'telling' (see *Behaviour Policy*).

Once the facts are clear, the Deputy Head / Head will discuss the incident with the parents of all children concerned. Should it emerge that this is a case of bullying then the Head will see the perpetrator's parents in person and will discuss with them the School's response. The child will also be asked to join the discussion and will be informed of the Head's decision.

The Head will also discuss the bullying incident with the victim's parents and later with the victim present. The Head, with the Deputy Head who has responsibility for the day to day running of the School, will put in force a programme of support for the victim.

Ideally, the victim and the perpetrator will meet in the presence of the Head and / or the Deputy Head and will share their feelings and shake hands after an apology. For minor incidents, the School tries to avoid the label of 'bully' and will give the child who is at fault guidance and support to help them modify their behaviour.

The incident will always be logged by the Deputy Head Pastoral in the School's Behaviour Records, and if the incident has been deemed 'bullying' then it must be recorded as such with a record of the sanctions imposed. Records are kept in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted or to enable patterns to be identified;

After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, the matter will be discussed at a Staff Meeting and any necessary measures put in place to prevent any repetition. At all times both the bully and the victim will be considered and support offered to both where indicated.

e) Reporting to outside agencies

The Head will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

Sanctions

See Behaviour and Discipline Policy

Disciplinary sanctions will be imposed that reflect the seriousness of an incident and convey a deterrent effect and the age of the pupil concerned. Should a repetition occur, the nature of the sanction will escalate.

For minor incidents, a letter of apology or the return of property may be sufficient, but



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other sanctions such as a report card may be appropriate. However, a serious or persistent case of bullying may result in immediate suspension or expulsion.

Prevention

Bullying is wrong and can cause serious psychological damage to individual or groups of children. We therefore do all we can to prevent it by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

Regular training raises the awareness of staff, so that the principles of the school policy are understood, legal responsibilities are known, action is defined to resolve and prevent problems, and available sources of support are understood. At times, the school invests in specialist training to understand the needs of their pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pupils. Staff also lead by example, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance.

Regular discussions at Staff Meetings includes places where bullying is most likely and the need for staff vigilance. In the event that a **potential** bullying incident is observed then the member of staff must not let it go unnoticed. A gentle reprimand, the separation of a group, the calming down of play or sending for a Deputy Head can prevent situations escalating, and also give the children a message about the boundaries of acceptable behaviour.

a) The Classroom

Children need to know the difference between right and wrong, although very young children will often not distinguish between the contexts in which words such as 'right' and 'wrong' are used, e.g. sometimes the word 'wrong' will refer only to socially unacceptable behaviour, like poking your tongue out; whilst at other times a moral absolute is involved, like bullying. Nevertheless, children need to be introduced from an early age to concepts of right and wrong, so that moral behaviour becomes an instinctive habit.

An atmosphere of trust, caring and respect in the classroom is essential. This is augmented by the use of educational elements such as personal, social, health citizenship and economic education (PSHEE), with discussion of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language as well as assemblies, projects, drama, stories, literature, historical events and current affairs to stimulate discussion.

b) EYFS

In Early Years, pupils are introduced to Circle Time, the Golden Rules early in the Foundation Stage. Teachers are mindful of what types of behaviour are age appropriate. A Key Person system is followed to support young children effectively, with strategies such as using Makaton to demonstrate signs for 'sad, happy, sorry, friends' which helps to cement understanding further. Discussion between teacher/Key Person and child forms the initial stage of behaviour management, to ensure that the child begins to understand what is wrong and that it is 'unacceptable'. Incidents are always recorded, allowing staff to gain a better understanding of the triggers or patterns in behaviour. Parental



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involvement is fundamental in this, and the Head of Nursery, Key People and class teachers meet with parents to discuss and suggest strategies for reinforcement if needed. More focus is given to promoting positive outcomes in Early Years, with pupils being awarded stickers for showing kind and positive behaviour towards others

c) Older Pupils

Prefects, Heads of Houses, the Head Boy / Girl and Deputy are appointments made to pupils who have shown during their time in the School that they are responsible, showing a kind and caring attitude to others. Their example is made evident to younger pupils and they have a visible role in whole school assemblies and house meetings.

d) Rewards

The award of House Points is not only for academic success but can be for small acts of kindness, a general helpful attitude or for generosity of time in for example, charitable fundraising. In this way, the importance of personal and moral values is celebrated.

Bullying Linked to Disability

At Devonshire House School, we are aware that a child with a disability, be it physical or mental or special educational needs, may be subject to bullying from other pupils. These children will be continually monitored to ensure that they are not the subject of ridicule or bullying in any way. By nature of their disability, e.g. autism, some children may be seen to provoke other children into an act of aggression or verbal abuse. However, this is not acceptable and to prevent this, teachers and assistants impress on all pupils, the need to be kind and thoughtful to everyone.

Bullying Linked to Ethnicity or Faith

There is no place for either of these in our School culture, which embraces a diversity of different ethnicity and faith. Each family is welcomed into the School community and is valued for their contribution to our happy, stable and cosmopolitan environment. As our youngest children may be intrigued by differences in the physical appearance or customs between themselves and their classmates, this is covered in our PSHEE programme and parents are invited into the School to talk about, for example, their celebration of a religious festival.

Bullying by Staff

Accusations of bullying by staff will be treated equally seriously. The Headteacher will conduct a full investigation and findings will be recorded. If there are sufficient concerns then advice from the police or local authorities will be sought. If there are safeguarding concerns then these will be reported immediately to the local authority however incidents of bullying by staff of a pupil are always a safeguarding concern and should be recorded as such.



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The Equality Act 2010

The new Equality Act 2010 replaces previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. A key provision is a new public sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. It replaces the three previous public sector equality duties for race, disability and gender, and also covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Schools are now required to comply with the new Equality Duty.

Cyber-Bullying

SEE School Use of technology policy

Cyber bullying includes bullying by electronic means (social websites, mobile telephones, sexting, text messages, email, photographs etc.) and is equally unacceptable. At Devonshire House, we do not allow pupils access to their own email accounts (except in exceptional circumstances under strict supervision – for example to email a forgotten homework), and mobile phones are only allowed for children that come to school or go home alone, these must be handed in to the Form teacher in the morning and are then collected at the end of the day. Social networking sites are similarly not allowed in school. Pupils are given strict guidance within PSHEE and ICT lessons about the use of the internet, and are made aware that any inappropriate use within school or off-site may well be treated as a serious offence and will incur the standard School sanctions. It may even be treated as illegal and police may be informed of certain types of behaviour. Staff should report any instances of inappropriate internet use to the Head, and pupils are reminded that if they receive unpleasant text messages or become involved in unkind comments, sexting or other on social network sites, they should never delete the message but save it and then show it to a responsible adult. (*See also Safeguarding Policy – Cyber Policy*)

Communication

The School's policies on behaviour and bullying are regularly communicated to parents, and are available on the School's website. Parents are therefore aware of the school's attitude to bullying and feel confident in coming to report any concerns that they make have.



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Transition

Records of issues of poor behaviour or bullying are transferred on progression up the school and are passed on to another school where appropriate.

Review

The Head, with the Senior Leadership Team will review this policy every year; with reference to any incidents of bullying, how they were dealt with and the success of the School's policy on prevention of bullying.

The Senior Deputy Head Pastoral is responsible for keeping a record of all bullying and behaviour incidents. A report is compiled for the Head and Governance and any changes in policy or procedure are then discussed and implemented as appropriate. Patterns or location, behaviour or age group are identified and changes implemented.



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Specialist organisations

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA): Founded in 2002 by NSPCC and National Children's Bureau, the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) brings together over 100 organisations into one network to develop and share good practice across the whole range of bullying issues. The ABA has also put together a fact sheet outlining the range of support that is available to schools and young people from the anti-bullying sector which can be accessed here

<https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>

Kidscape: A charity established to prevent bullying and promote child protection providing advice for young people, professionals and parents about different types of bullying and how to tackle it. They also offer specialist training and support for school staff, and assertiveness training for young people.

<https://www.kidscape.org.uk/>

The Diana Award: Anti-Bullying Ambassadors programme to empower young people to take responsibility for changing the attitudes and behaviour of their peers towards bullying. It will achieve this by identifying, training and supporting school anti-bullying ambassadors.

<https://diana-award.org.uk/>

The BIG Award: The Bullying Intervention Group (BIG) offer a national scheme and award for schools to tackle bullying effectively.

<https://www.bullyinginterventiongroup.org/big-award>

a) Cyber-bullying

ChildNet International: Specialist resources for young people to raise awareness of online safety and how to protect themselves

<https://www.childnet.com/>

Think U Know: resources provided by Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) for children and young people, parents, carers and teachers.

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/resource/thinkuknow-advice-from-ceop>

Advice on Child Internet Safety 1.0: The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCIS) has produced universal guidelines for providers on keeping children safe online.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-council-for-internet-safety>

b) LGBT

EACH: (Educational Action Challenging Homophobia): provides a national freephone

<https://each.education/resources>

Stonewall: An LGB equality organisation with considerable expertise in LGB bullying in schools, a dedicated youth site, resources for schools, and specialist training for teachers.

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/>



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c) SEND

Mencap: Represents people with learning disabilities, with specific advice and information for people who work with children and young people.

<https://www.mencap.org.uk/>

Changing Faces: Provide online resources and training to schools on bullying because of physical difference.

<https://www.changingfaces.org.uk/>

Cyberbullying and children and young people with SEN and disabilities: Advice provided by the Anti-Bullying Alliance on developing effective anti-bullying practice.

Anti-bullying Alliance SEND programme of resources: Advice provided by the Anti-bullying Alliance for school staff and parents on issues related to SEND and bullying.

d) Racism

Show Racism the Red Card: Provide resources and workshops for schools to educate young people, often using the high profile of football, about racism.

<https://www.theredcard.org/>

Kick it Out: Uses the appeal of football to educate young people about racism and provide education packs for schools.

<https://www.kickitout.org/>

Anne Frank Trust: Runs a schools project to teach young people about Anne Frank and the Holocaust, the consequences of unchecked prejudice and discrimination, and cultural diversity.

<https://www.annefrank.org.uk/>