



## **ANTIBULLYING POLICY**

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|-------------|----------------|
| Adopted     | M. Davies      |
| Committee   | September 2024 |
| Review Date | Members        |
|             | September 2025 |

### **Our Vision**

*At Demetae Academy we believe childhood should be protected and encouraged with nurture and well-being at the heart of everything we do, the talents your child has will be celebrated daily.*

*The key to our learning style is independence, where children are taught how to think not what to think, in a culture of self-directed learning - curiosity and innovation are the key to academic achievement and discovery. We will encourage a love of our surroundings, the environment and each other, whilst creating resilient learners who are prepared for life in an ever-changing world.*

*Demetae Academy will be rich with individuality, excitement and encouragement.*

*Our aim is for every child who attends Demetae Academy to have a truly unique and engaging learning experience and as they continue their life journey, they will use the skills and knowledge they have gained that will lead them on a pathway to a life of success.*

***'For one, for all'***

This policy has regard to the updated DfE guidance 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2017) and it draws on the 2020 DfE guidance on the Independent Schools Standards and also the previous guidance, 'Safe to Learn - Embedding Anti-Bullying Work in Schools' and considers the recommendations in the OFSTED Review of sexual abuse in schools and college (June 2021) and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024. The policy also considers the way in which the school can ensure that the aims of the Equal Opportunities Policy are fulfilled in ensuring the rights of those with protected characteristics are upheld.

## **Aims**

The overall aims of this policy are the prevention of bullying and, should instances of bullying occur, to help staff and pupils to deal with it effectively. In this respect, the school seeks:

- To ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, without fear of being bullied
- To ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of the nature and types of bullying that may occur, both in and out of school, and their causes and effects
- To ensure high expectations of pupils' behaviour, as detailed in the school's behaviour policy
- To use all pupils, staff and parents as a positive resource in the elimination of any form of bullying, drawing on peer pressure as a means of preventing bullying
- To ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware that bullying is totally unacceptable
- To ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities in addressing bullying issues
- To provide regular staff training in relation to the prevention of and response to bullying
- To develop effective strategies to prevent bullying
- To provide a consistent school response to any bullying and have clear procedures for dealing with incidents
- To provide support for both victim and bully

## **Definition**

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, by an individual or a group, which intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally and possibly causing psychological damage. It is usually repeated over a period of time, where it is often difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

It can happen anywhere, both in and out of school.

Bullying can have a negative life-long impact. It can make it difficult for children to learn and can have a lasting detrimental effect on their lives. Young people who have been bullied can become anxious and withdrawn, depressed or aggressive. Some turn to substance misuse as a way of dealing with it emotionally and, at worst, bullying has been a factor in suicide. (Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour).

Bullying can take various different forms, including:

- Racial/Religious/Cultural – where someone is made to feel inferior because of their background, culture or religion.
- Sexual/sexist - behaviour, physical or non-physical, where sexuality or gender is used as a weapon against another. It is any behaviour which degrades someone, singles someone out using sexual language, gestures or violence, and victimising someone for their appearance. Sexual bullying is also pressured to act promiscuously and to act in a way that makes others uncomfortable.
- Homophobic - bullying based on sexual orientation
- Special Needs or Disability - any exploitation of a particular aspect of a child's disability and/or special educational needs
- Because a child is adopted or a carer
- Cyber-bullying via technology. For example, internet/mobile phones, email, social networks, text messages, online sexual harassment, sending of unwanted photographs or asking for/pressurising others to do so. (Please refer to Cyber Safety Policy.)

These forms of bullying reflect the 'protected characteristics' as defined in the 2010 Equality Act. These are: Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Sex and Sexual orientation. The school works with its pupils to develop a sense of respect and tolerance towards those with a protected characteristic and thus guard against bullying in relation to such characteristics.

Bullying can include name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, pushing, taking belongings, inappropriate touching, producing offensive graffiti, spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours or regularly excluding someone from groups or games. It is also bullying when a young person is pressured to act against their will by others or is harassed by unwanted conduct, which violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or humiliating environment.

### **Non-intended hurt**

Not all hurtful behaviour is deliberate or intended to harm or hurt; there are instances of behaviour that are a consequence of thoughtlessness, unkindness or meanness. Any behaviour which a reasonable bystander would say was calculated or intended to hurt or upset the victim is wrong and may well constitute bullying behaviour. It is possible that in some instances bullying behaviour is not malicious and can be corrected with advice without the need for disciplinary sanctions. It must be made clear that these forms of bullying behaviour are equally unacceptable. It is not a justification for a bully to say they did not believe, or were not aware, the victim was upset or hurt by their actions; a repetition of such behaviours over time should lead to other actions in line with this policy and the behaviour policy.

### **Signs and Symptoms of Bullying**

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a child:

- Is unwilling to go to school
- Is frequently absent from school
- Regularly has homework which is not done or lost
- Changes his or her usual routine
- Becomes anxious, withdrawn or is lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries him- or herself to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to achieve less well in school work
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions which are damaged or “go missing”
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- Has tuck money or other money continually “lost”
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Stops eating
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Is frightened to say what’s wrong
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous or jumpy when a cyber message is received
- Is evasive or gives improbable excuses in relation to any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems or circumstances, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

### **Action against Bullying**

It is essential that all adults in the school community know what to do when they suspect that a child is being bullied and which member of staff to contact. Whether bullying occurs in school, out of school or on-line, staff will have a range of appropriate strategies on which to call:

- Skilled observation to recognise and respond to the symptoms noted above.
- Ready receipt of reports of bullying behaviour, which are then investigated, acted upon and the information relating to the alleged bully and their victims reported as appropriate.

- Use of the school curriculum, for example in subjects such as PSHE, Circle time, story time, drama, English and history, to embrace the topic of bullying, including its dangers, how to prevent it and the steps to take when it occurs.
- Development of the RSHE curriculum in order to address appropriate and inappropriate behaviours in relationships and in regard to sexual and homophobic bullying and harassment, and how to deal with these if they encounter them
- Use, as above, of other elements of school life, including assemblies, house meetings, school council and visiting speakers.
- Use, as above, of focussed projects, such as an annual Anti-Bullying Week and focussed training, for example in safe use of the internet.
- Availability of this policy on the school's website to enable parents to understand the school's approach and work together with staff.
- Close parent/teacher liaison to ensure that both home and school work together to help and support the victim and moderate the behaviour of the bully.
- Where appropriate and following discussion with the Headteacher, engagement with outside assistance, such as an educational psychologist, social worker or the police - in helping children who bully others.
- Ensuring that staff are fully aware of times and places when bullying is most likely to occur; organisation of the school day and supervision arrangements reduce the likely incidence of bullying. This includes supervision of changing and showering areas, monitoring the use of washrooms and cloakrooms at break times and the regular coverage of secluded areas at break times by duty staff.
- A good proportion of PE and games lessons and other physical activity to enable pupils to burn off energy and aggression.
- Use of the buddies and other strategies as part of the school's pastoral care to encourage vertical bonding between age groups, giving older pupils a sense of responsibility and younger children a chance to externalise feelings and anxieties that they may not share with an adult member of staff or even their own family.
- All children given the opportunity to speak to their teachers or other adults. This person is someone they feel comfortable with, who knows the child well and understands that the child may turn to him or her. Where it is recognised that a child may not be comfortable turning to his form teacher or tutor, alternative arrangements will be put in place.
- Familiarity of all staff with this policy; staff will sign to say that they have read and understood this policy.
- Through staff training and by regular discussion at staff meetings, raising the awareness of all staff to the dangers of bullying, how to prevent it, what action to take to resolve problems, and developing an understanding of the legal responsibilities and the sources of support available.
- Where appropriate, training in, or drawing on, external expertise in specialist skills to understand pupils' specific needs, for example to assist staff in being vigilant and in taking appropriate action in relation to the vulnerability to bullying of pupils with SEND.

## **Procedures to Follow**

This policy only works if it ensures that the whole school community understands that bullying is not to be tolerated and understands the steps that will be taken both to prevent and to respond to bullying.

## **The Role of the Headteacher**

The Headteacher will be informed of any incidents of bullying and will ensure that all incidents are thoroughly investigated and properly logged centrally. The Headteacher will be responsible for ensuring the maintenance of a school bullying log and reporting on a termly basis via the Head's Report to Members. The Headteacher will then collaborate with the Assistant Heads in ensuring that an investigation takes place in every case and each situation is treated seriously. If bullying is found to have definitely occurred, the parents of any children involved will be contacted and informed of what action the school is to take by the Headteacher or Deputy Head.

The Headteacher will ensure that the Deputy Head and all staff undertake appropriate training in taking action against bullying.

## **The Role of the Head of School**

The main roles of the Head of School in respect of bullying are:

- Managing and monitoring practices to ensure alignment with the school anti-bullying policy and procedures.
- Maintaining a clear overview of the incidence of bullying and the school's anti-bullying prevention and response strategies.
- Liaison with the Headteacher and between all parties involved, including parents.
- Ensuring that incident slips (or electronic entries) are completed by staff in all cases and that a copy is stored in the incident file.
- On a regular basis, analysis of the incident file so that patterns and trends can be identified and the analysis used to improve policy and practice.
- Promotion and co-ordination of anti-bullying initiatives and projects both within the curriculum and in the wider aspects of school life
- Deployment of appropriate strategies to ensure that bullies change their behaviour and support them in doing so.
- Endeavour to create a culture where pupils feel confident in coming forward to report incidences of bullying including those of a sexual nature

The Deputy Head will be fully briefed by the Headteacher, who will ensure that they receive appropriate training, guidance and information.

## The Role of the Staff

It is essential that all members of staff contribute to creating a school ethos which does not tolerate bullying and minimises the likelihood of incidents ever occurring.

- Staff must ensure that they have read and understand this policy.
- Staff must ensure that their training in taking action against bullying remains up to date.
- Staff will be aware of and exploit aspects the curriculum and wider aspects of school life where they can embrace the topic of bullying, including its dangers, how to prevent it and the steps to take when it occurs.
- All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered from bullying
- All staff should be vigilant and open to the possibility of bullying occurring in the school and should avoid an attitude that is dismissive or suggests that “it doesn’t happen here”.

In any case where bullying is reported or suspected, staff must follow this procedure:

1. In most cases the incident should be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who is approached.
2. Listen carefully and intently.
3. Reassure the child that you are sympathetic and that the problem will be resolved.
4. Do not ask any leading questions.
5. Do not promise to keep the issue confidential – it is important to maintain the pupils’ trust by remaining honest.
6. Make a clear account of the conversation on an incident slip as soon as it has ended but try to avoid taking notes during discussion.
7. Report the matter as soon as is practical to the DSL.
8. Discuss with the DSL how to proceed with, for example, further interviews, liaison with parents and what action is to be taken, in accordance with the school’s behaviour policy.
9. Continue to address the incident as agreed with the DSL
10. Ensure that the incident continues to be fully recorded on the incident slip, together with details of what action has been taken.
11. Liaise with the DSL to ensure that all staff are kept informed of the incident and action taken, as appropriate
12. Remember that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. Staff should refer to the section in the Safeguarding Policy on physical restraint
13. Ensure that appropriate support is provided for all parties concerned.

14. 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; the matter should be reported to the DSL and procedures should be followed, as detailed in the safeguarding policy.

15. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following the child protection policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy. This is likely to involve reporting the incident to Social Care, and also to the police if it is believed that the safeguarding situation constitutes a criminal concern.

### **Information and Guidance for Pupils**

- As a member of the school, we expect you not to have to put up with any form of bullying behaviour. We can and will help to put a stop to it.
  - You should feel free to speak out to your mum or dad or any teacher if you are being bullied. We can help you to cope with it straight away.
  - When someone else is being bullied or is in distress, inform a member of staff immediately.
  - Do not be afraid to report any incidents. Watching and doing nothing can suggest support for the bully. Even if you are just a bystander, you have a role to play in reporting any incidence of bullying.
  - If you wish to inform the school of an incident involving bullying or perceived bullying but want to remain anonymous, you can write a note and put it in FRED in the school entrance hall.
  - Do not put up with bullies in your group of friends. Bullies will soon stop if they are left out or are by themselves.
  - Take care how you speak and act towards other pupils. Always aim to be considerate and helpful.
- Information and Guidance for Parents

- You may not recognise that your child is being bullied. However, changes in their manner, behaviour and general state of health can sometimes be explained by bullying.
- Encourage your child to talk about it, but be patient. It is quite natural for him or her not to want to discuss the matter and not to want you to do anything about it.
- Listen and try not to interrupt.
- Reassure them that you are sympathetic and that it is a problem that can be solved. It happens to most people at some time.
- Ask him or her if there are ways of changing things and help them to try to develop strategies to cope, strategies which should then be practised.
- Try to keep the situation in proportion and so remain good-humoured.
- Encourage your child to talk to their form teacher or tutor about the matter.
- You should feel free to contact your child's teacher to discuss the matter if you are concerned.