

DAWLISH COLLEGE

Anti Bullying Policy

The aim of the Dawlish College Anti-Bullying Policy is to prevent bullying of any sort and to ensure that everyone can operate in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. All members of our community should have an understanding of what bullying is and be familiar with the college policy on bullying: therefore the aim of the policy is to help members of the college community to deal with bullying when it occurs and, even more importantly, to prevent it. Bullying is an anti-social behaviour which affects everyone; it is unacceptable and it will not be tolerated. Everyone in the college has a responsibility to report any incident of bullying that comes to their attention and these reports will always be taken seriously.

At Dawlish College we want to:

- Ensure a positive ethos in which people value and respect each other
- Provide opportunities for students to learn to develop supportive relationships
- To enable all members of the college to deal with incidents consistently

Definition of Bullying

Bullying may be defined as any deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time which intentionally hurts another student or group physically or emotionally, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves, and is often motivated by prejudice.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- physical (including sexual) assault
- verbal abuse, by name calling, teasing or making offensive remarks
- cyber-bullying, which is defined as the use of ICT by an individual or group in a way that is intended to upset others. Examples include using social websites, mobile phones, text messaging, photographs, video and e-mail
- indirect emotional tormenting by excluding from social groups or spreading malicious rumours

Bullying may involve complicity that falls short of direct participation by, for instance, manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It may be overt and aggressive but is often hidden and subtle. It includes actions or comments that are racist, religious or cultural, homophobic, transphobic, sexist, sexual or which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape) or any reference to special educational needs.

At Dawlish College we recognise that the possibility of bullying is among the top concerns that parents have about their children's safety and well-being and this includes when students are on college transport. Bullying is also a top concern of children and young people themselves. Bullying makes the lives of its victims a misery; it undermines their confidence and self-esteem, and destroys their sense of security and can be psychologically damaging. Bullying impacts on its victim's attendance and attainment at school, marginalises those groups who may be particular targets for bullies and can have a life-long negative impact on some young people's lives.

It is acknowledged that bullies may have complex reasons for their behaviour and may well need help. It should also be recognised that the consequences of being allowed to 'get away with it' can be detrimental to them as well as to their victim. All students deserve the opportunity to be helped to understand what acceptable behaviour is. Students are educated through PSE, assemblies, tutor time and drama to raise awareness, with discussions of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice.

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school.

All members of the community must be alert to the signs of bullying; Staff should act promptly and firmly against it, in accordance with college policy. Surveys have shown that in the vast majority of bullying incidents, most people knew that what was going on was wrong. Sometimes people, either through lethargy, peer group pressure, or tacit support for what is going on, fail to take action.

Students - If you feel that you are being bullied or you are aware of another student who is being bullied you should report this straight away. This includes cyber bullying.

All students can report incidents to any member of staff or to the Student Office. This area is always staffed and a member of the support staff can be available to help students who have special educational needs or disabilities. Students will be asked to record incident(s) to allow further investigation and witness statements to be collated.

The incidents will be fully investigated and appropriate sanctions will be used. This includes fixed term exclusions. If it is considered appropriate a meeting between students can be used as a restorative measure and this will be chaired by a member of staff.

Parents/carers will be informed and the incident will be recorded.

If appropriate, further support can be put in place for example appointments with the college Counsellor and the creation of a Pastoral Support Plan.

In very serious cases it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or Social Services. However, it is the policy of the college to attempt to resolve such issues internally using our own disciplinary sanctions, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.

Dawlish College has a Police Surgery every Wednesday break time and students, staff and parents can arrange to meet informally with a Police Officer. This has been very helpful to students and parents/carers in the past when there have been incidents of cyber bullying.

The Behaviour Policy states that the sanction for an incident of bullying is being internally isolated in the unit. Repeated incidents of bullying however will result in a fixed term exclusion being issued at the discretion of the Head of College.