

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

South Dartmoor Community College takes bullying seriously, and we have a dedicated team to investigate incidents and support students where bullying has been reported. We have a telling culture.

Mission Statement

Empowering everyone to be the best that they can be.

1. **Excellence** – We will provide students with opportunities in which to excel, to empower them to make free choices as a foundation for the best possible future; with outcomes in line with or better than their peers nationally.
2. **Equality** – We will provide high quality teaching and learning, delivering a broad, knowledge rich curriculum, where high aspirations are the norm and success is celebrated, to all students regardless of their background, ethnicity, religion, gender, educational need.
3. **Truth** – We will pursue truth open-mindedly, seeking to help students to enquire, question and challenge, helping them to be well-rounded, resilient, confident, independent learners with a love for learning.
4. **Respect** – We will create a safe community that has at its core an understanding of deep respect for self, for others and for the environment; strong relationships are key.

Executive Head teacher: Jen Veal
Lead Officer: Dan Vile, Assistant Head teacher (Culture).
Lead Governor: Dominic Course It is Governors' responsibility to monitor provision and ensure strategic implementation of the policy.
Policy Date: January 2024 This policy will be formally reviewed annually.

South Dartmoor Community College

In every school and every organisation bullying is a reality for some students. We are committed to preventing bullying. Bullying may take the form of words, actions, expressions or attitudes and is intentional behaviour to harm another. It can involve direct contact between persons or indirect contact, eg via text-messaging, email and the internet.

We want to encourage openness about bullying. Students must feel that all staff take bullying seriously and that they will act to stop it. We encourage students to support each other by informing staff if their friends are being bullied. Staff will not tolerate the disruption of a student's education and well-being by the behaviour of another student or students.

Definition

Bullying is 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 the 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.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case. Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves.

The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derived from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online. (DfE publication July 2017, Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Case Studies)

Bullying may be the following repeated:

- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures).
- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact, unwanted sexualised comments or sexually abusive comments.
- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
- Online: through the mechanisms of messaging and social media platforms.

Discrimination against protected characteristics, which can include hate incidents and hate crimes (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation):

- A hate incident is any hostile incident which the victim, or anyone else, thinks is based on someone's prejudice towards them because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or because they are transgender.
- It becomes a hate crime if a hate incident amounts to a criminal offence i.e. physical violence/assault, harassment, criminal damage, obscene/offensive calls, texts, emails etc. or Discrimination against a protected characteristic, for example racist bullying, can include racial names, taunts, graffiti, gestures, being treated differently, social exclusion, racist jokes, stereotyping and assumptions being based upon race or culture (ref: Childline, 2022).
- Discrimination against a protected characteristic, for example homophobic or transphobic because of, or focusing on, the issue of sexuality and/or gender, can include names, taunts, language, rumour-mongering, stereotyping, social exclusion, threat of being exposed or 'outed' and inappropriate sexual gestures and comments (ref: NatCen Social Research for Government Equalities Office, supported by DfE, 2016).

South Dartmoor Community College

NB: this is not an exhaustive list

Rationale

The Children Act and UNESCO Articles of Human Rights Declarations make it clear that every student has the right to feel safe and secure. The single, most important thing a school can do to prevent bullying is to have a clear policy to which staff, students and parents are committed and which they act upon. Bullying is not tolerated at South Dartmoor Community College and students, staff, parents/carers are made aware of this through a variety of ways. Our Behaviour for Learning policy outlines expectations for all members of the College Community.

Expectations of staff;

- All staff, students and parents/carers should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All staff should know what the College policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All students and parents/carers should know what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a college we take bullying seriously. Students and parents/carers should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

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 that they should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from college.
- Does not want to go on the College/public bus.
- Begs to be driven to college.
- Changes their usual routine.
- Is unwilling to go to college (school phobic).
- Begins truanting.
- Becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence.
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away.
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares.
- Feels ill in the morning.
- Begins to do poorly in college work.
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged.
- Has possessions go "missing".
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully).
- Has dinner or other monies continually "lost".
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises.
- Comes home starving (money/lunch has been stolen).
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
- Is bullying other children or siblings.
- Stops eating • Is frightened to say what's wrong.
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

The knowledge that bullying of any kind will not be tolerated is conveyed via assemblies and through tutorials. It is essential that the bully and the victim understand that further bullying, or any repercussions from staff intervention, will not be tolerated.

Staff have guidelines for action on bullying so that incidents are dealt with consistently.

- Bullying within a tutor or subject group on a minor level might be dealt with by individual staff via tutorial or discussion.
- More serious bullying incidents, or repetitive bullying behaviour, must be reported to the Pastoral team.

South Dartmoor Community College

- The Head of Year (HOY) will make an initial assessment of the incident to decide if a Restorative Approach is suitable. This may entail the Pastoral team interviewing all students involved or, if appropriate, them passing the case onto another member of staff, eg the Pastoral team, to do so. Details of interviews are kept and filed for future reference.
- Where appropriate a restorative conference will be held. This would be organised by the Pastoral team. Personal Tutors and other staff will be informed of the outcomes of the restorative conference as appropriate. Parents may be informed if appropriate.
- A child who is being bullied may need strategies to build self-esteem and confidence. Pastoral team may refer students to school counsellors. Equally, the bully may need help to modify their behaviour and may be referred to the Educational Psychologist.
- In the event of a major incident, such as serious physical violence, students should be sent immediately to a member of the Pastoral team who will liaise with the appropriate HOY. Incidents of this type may lead to a suspension. Police will be involved where appropriate.

When dealing with bullying, the following disciplinary steps can be taken:

- Official warnings to cease offending.
- Detention.
- Supervised breaktimes.
- Exclusion from certain areas of college premises.
- Reflection.
- External reflection.
- Fixed term suspension.
- Permanent exclusion.
- Police reporting and meetings.
- Hate incidents and hate crimes are reported to Devon County Council.

References

Preventing and Tackling Bullying DFE 2017.

Web links:

1. www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools
2. www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion
3. www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2
4. www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25

Legislative links

- Education Act 1996.
- Education Act 2002.
- Equality Act 2010.
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Here are some other useful links if you would like further support:

- The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA): Founded in 2002 by the 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.
- anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information.

South Dartmoor Community College

- Childline www.childline.org.uk/.
- National Bullying Helpline: www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk.
- The Diana Award: diana-award.org.uk.