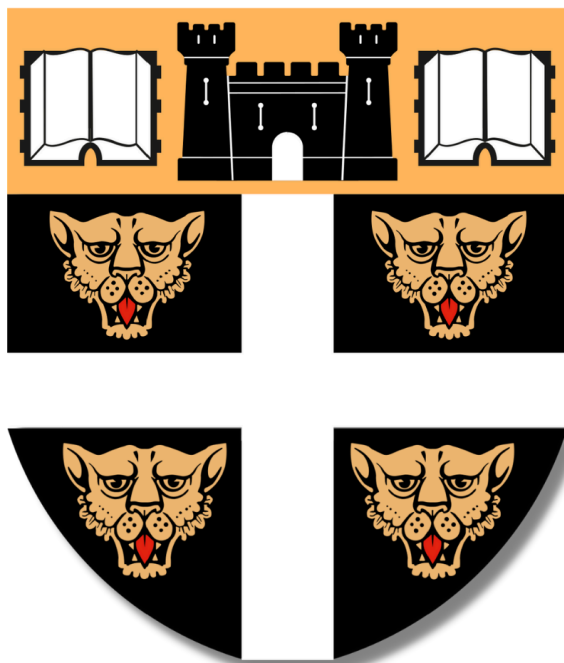


# Anti-Bullying Policy

Dover College



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Approved By:	CS-M	Date: September 2025
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## **1. AIMS**

At Dover College, we aim to provide a caring, safe and friendly environment, where our pupils can learn and develop in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is anti-social behaviour and is not tolerated. Thankfully, bullying at Dover College is a rare occurrence but can surface occasionally and is always taken as a concern when it arises. If bullying does occur, all pupils and parents should be able to inform someone within the school and have confidence that the incident will be dealt with promptly, effectively and appropriately. We expect anyone who knows that bullying is happening to inform a member of staff immediately.

The College takes a four-pronged approach to bullying:

1. Educating pupils formally and informally, fostering good relationships and emphasising care and tolerance towards individuals.
2. Encouraging pupils to watch and recognise signs of unhappiness in other pupils and be confident to report it to a member of staff.
3. Provide an anti-bullying policy and complaints procedure which are understood by staff and pupils.
4. Treating bullying cases with circumspection and in the first instance with a balanced approach. However, continued unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with robustly.

## **2. DEFINITION**

Bullying is the intentional, repetitive or persistent hurting of one person by another, often where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying may not necessarily include individual examples of unpleasant, aggressive or anti-social behaviour. Bullying can be done face to face, through third parties, or through sending messages or images by email, text or over the internet.

This policy applies to the whole school including day and boarding pupils and the early years' provision. Dover College recognises that children can be particularly vulnerable in residential settings and are alert to the potential for child-on-child abuse. The school will comply with its obligations as set out in the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools at all times.

## **3. TYPES OF BULLYING**

Bullying can be and includes for the purpose of this Policy:

- Emotional: Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures).
- Physical: Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence, threatening or obscene gestures.
- Racial: Using racial taunts, graffiti, gestures because of someone's colour and/or origin.
- Sexual/Sexist: Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments because of gender.

- Verbal Insults: sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing and name-calling including comments made against particular groups ( see prejudice-based bullying)
- Cyber-bullying: All areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse, social network sites, threats by text messaging & telephone calls, and misuse of photographic technology, e.g. cameras and videos. This includes sexting or threatening and/or blackmailing a person to share images of that person or purporting to be that person or connected with them in some way.
- Prejudice-based bullying against others on account of their race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age and disability (including SEND)
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

#### **4. OBJECTIVES**

- To provide a caring environment in which pupils develop respect for themselves and for others;
- To encourage pupils to be kind, fair, and honest and therefore develop within themselves a total rejection of bullying in any form;
- To ensure that all in the school community are aware that bullying will not be tolerated;
- To create an open and supportive climate for all pupils, so that bullying is reported and dealt with swiftly;
- To ensure that pupils are aware that retaliation against bullying is never the right approach. Instead, they must report it to the school;
- To ensure that pupils and parents know about the school policy on bullying and know what they should do if bullying arises;
- To ensure that staff are familiar with the school policy on bullying and know what they should do if bullying is reported to them, dealing with it in a way that takes account of the needs of both the victim and the bully.

#### **5. WHOLE SCHOOL STRATEGY TO PREVENT BULLYING**

- The Dover College Code for Conduct emphasises the need for mutual respect and care within the College community;
- The PSHE/RSE Jigsaw Programme provides a range of opportunities for pupils to discuss issues to do with friendship, relationships, caring for each other in the community as well as discussing bullying as a specific topic;
- Whole College Assemblies, House Meetings and Chapel Services regularly focus on issues such as respect, friendship, community values and bullying itself, including cyber-bullying;
- All staff and pupils are reminded of the Anti-bullying policy as well as the Behaviour policy and sanctions at the start of every academic year. It is also part of the induction of new staff.
- All staff are expected to treat all pupils with respect, fairness and justice;
- There is always a member of staff on duty each day during free time around the College grounds. Housemaster/Housemistress and Matrons are also available in the

houses. Other adults present around the College enable pupils' easy access to staff members if the need arises;

- Some older pupils are trained as Peer Mentors to vulnerable pupils and Safeguarding Prefects work to raise awareness of bullying including cyber-bullying;
- Regular 'Round Table' meetings, in the Prep and Senior School involve groups of pupils and the DSL or DDSL, who provide opportunities for the College to identify emerging behaviours and issues within the pupil body;
- All staff have a pastoral duty within the College and most are assigned to a House tutor team within the houses; The House tutor is expected to support the Housemaster/Housemistress to keep a close eye on the well being of their charges and their relationship with their peers.
- Pupils will be made aware of whom they can talk to in confidence, including the Independent Listener and School Counsellor. All cases will be treated with discretion and sensitivity;
- All staff are asked to watch for early signs of distress in pupils (deterioration in work, spurious illness, isolation, avoidance of their own peer group) and report any concerns to the relevant Housemaster/Housemistress.

## **6. PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING**

All reports of bullying are taken seriously and dealt with promptly. Staff should listen carefully to accounts and try not to make premature assumptions.

Reports of any bullying concerns are usually dealt with by the Housemaster/Housemistress, in the first instance, with support from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Head of Prep or Senior School. The first priority is to stop the bullying and support both the victim and the bully from future recurrence.

1. Alert - Cases of bullying or suspected incidents should be immediately reported to the relevant Housemaster/Housemistress, via MyConcern (Support staff who do not have access to technology should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead or one of the Deputy Heads in person.)
2. Investigation - The Housemaster/Housemistress will notify the Deputy Head and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and an investigation will be conducted. If the allegations are concrete, the parents of both the victim and the bully will be informed. A copy of the notes and actions taken will be placed on MyConcern.
3. Reporting - At the earliest opportunity the pupil(s) concerned will be 'flagged' to the staff and they will be asked to observe the pupil(s) and to report any incidents regarded as bullying. A bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. All reports of bullying or suspected bullying will be added to the School Bullying Log by the DSL.
4. Actions - Although sanctions might be given, in accordance with our behaviour policy, we recognise that sanctioning children who bully may not always be appropriate. When sanctions are given, they will include an educational and self reflective aspect. Consideration is given to the context of the incident when deciding on action towards children who bully. In the first instance, children who bully will be given the

opportunity to learn from their mistakes and move forward with their peers. Involvement of parents and the use of other support networks may be appropriate at this stage. Where possible, a restorative justice meeting will take place to help all parties involved to move forward. In the meeting, the victim of bullying will have a chance to explain the harm that has been caused and the child who has bullied can apologise, learn from it and suggest a way to make amends. When further sanctions are necessary, they are intended to hold pupils who bully to account for their behaviour and to help them reflect on the reason and consequence of their behaviour.. In cases of severe and persistent bullying the sanctions may ultimately include exclusion. The School will inform and work with parents in all incidents of bullying, advising them on the strategies to adopt, whether their child is being bullied or the one doing the bullying.

5. Monitoring and Reviews - The Housemaster/Housemistress involved will oversee monitoring of the situation in conjunction with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Head. Those involved will discuss outcomes to date and whether it is necessary to continue monitoring or set a date for a future review meeting. In extreme cases, the Headmaster may be asked to join such meetings. If a pupil does not respond positively to attempts to stop the bullying behaviour, the pupil will be dealt with according to the College's Behaviour Policy and appropriate sanctions robustly applied, which could lead to exclusion and/or referral to outside agencies.
6. Feedback - At each stage of the procedure staff should be kept informed at flagging meetings of any pupils requiring monitoring. The College should make clear to parents of victims and bullies, the actions being taken, why they are being taken and what they can do to support our decisions.

## **7. CYBER-BULLYING**

Cyberbullying is defined as 'an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend himself/herself.'. It can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. Cyberbullying can be a very serious matter and can constitute a criminal offence. The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyberbullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones. There is no need for parental consent to search through a student's phone or similar device. If the school believes the police need to be involved (for example, it is relevant to , contains a pornographic image of a child or extreme pornography) then images must not be deleted.

The school recognizes that it must take note of bullying perpetrated outside school, which spills over into school; therefore once aware, we will respond to any cyber-bullying we become aware of carried out by pupils when they are away from the school site.

The following measures are put into place to tackle cyber-bullying:

1. All teaching staff receive annual online safety training and are regularly updated on new digital platforms used by pupils and their dangers.

2. As part of the PSHE/RSE programme and Computer science scheme of work, pupils are taught to understand how to use technologies safely and to know about the risks and consequences of misusing them; to understand what to do if they or someone they know is being cyberbullied ; to report any problems with cyberbullying and whom to talk to.
3. The school uses a variety of security tools to ensure that the programmes and websites most frequently used for cyberbullying are unavailable on the school network. The boarding staff regularly warns boarders of the danger of abuse , bullying and unsafe practice using electronic communications which they monitor the use of.
4. The procedures for dealing with cyber-bullying will be the same as the procedures listed above for bullying. Steps will be taken to assess the harm caused, identify those involved, look at steps to repair harm, change the perpetrator' s behaviour and attitude in order to prevent a recurrence and monitor the well being of the victim through regular checks and touch base meetings. Any sanctioning will include an educational and self reflective aspect and support for both the bully and the victim as well as their parents will be given.

## **8. PREJUDICE-BASED BULLYING BECAUSE OF A PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC**

At Dover College, we foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. Pupils are educated in the knowledge and understanding of the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act of 2010 and to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;

The following measures are put into place to tackle prejudice-based bullying:

1. In the staff handbook, staff are made aware that Part 6 of the Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to admissions, the way it provides education for pupils, provision of pupil access to any benefit, facility or service, or by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.
2. As part of the PSHE/RSE programme, pupils are taught the importance of mutual respect, look at the Equality Act and the protected characteristics and discuss various scenarios to establish best practice.
3. The school uses a variety of security tools to ensure that the programs and websites most frequently used for prejudice-base incitement and bullying are unavailable on the school network

The procedures for dealing with prejudice-based bullying will be the same as the procedures listed above for bullying. Steps will be taken to assess the harm caused, identify those involved, look at steps to repair harm, change the perpetrator' s behaviour and attitude in order to prevent a recurrence and monitor the well being of the victim through regular checks and touch base meetings. Any sanctioning will include an educational and self reflective aspect and support for both the bully and the victim as well as their parents will be given.

Part 6 of the Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to admissions, the way it provides education for pupils, provision of pupil access to any benefit, facility or service, or by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment. In England and Wales Part 6 of the Act applies to maintained schools and Academies and to other independent schools.

## **9. CHILD -ON-CHILD ABUSE**

Child- on-Child abuse occurs when a young person is exploited or harmed by their peers who are the same or similar age; everyone directly involved in peer on peer abuse is under the age of 18. 'Child-on-Child' abuse can relate to various forms of abuse (not just sexual abuse and exploitation), and is harmful to the child perpetrator as well as the victim. Other forms of abuse include: cyberbullying, sexual violence and harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling; sexting and initiating/hazing type violence and rituals.

Sexual violence and harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or harassing a single child or group of children. Children subjected to this will likely find the experience highly distressing.

Staff are made aware:

- Such behaviour is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- They are not to dismiss sexual harassment or violence merely as 'banter', 'part of growing up', 'just having a laugh', 'boys being boys', 'girls being girls';
- They must challenge behaviours such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing such behaviours or tolerating them risks normalising them.

Examples of child- on-child abuse include:

- Emotional: being deliberately unfriendly, excluding people from groups, tormenting (e.g. hiding books or possessions, making threatening gestures, damaging property or theft of property);
- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, spitting or using any form of physical violence;
- Racist: racial taunts, gestures or graffiti;
- Religious: anti-religious or sectarian taunts, gestures or graffiti;
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive comments or rumours;
- Homophobic: focussing on the issue of sexuality, including name calling;
- Verbal: name calling, teasing, mocking, spreading rumours, making offensive comments;
- Focussed on special needs or disability;

- Cyber: misuse of all areas of the internet, such as email and chat rooms, mobile phones, text messaging, camera or video technology deliberately used to cause offence, torment or spread rumours.

The College operates a separate Child-on-Child Abuse Policy, as we are committed to the prevention and early intervention of such behaviour.

## 10. BULLYING IN BOARDING

We acknowledge that boarders are potentially more at risk than day pupils as they spend more time with their peers, which could provide more opportunities for bullying. Unlike day pupils, boarders are not able to “escape” from bullies when going home. Furthermore, it is clear that signs indicating that a child might be bullied will be more easily spotted by parents of day pupils than by the House Staff due to the number of pupils under their care.

Whilst our anti-bullying policy is the same for boarders as for day pupils, in terms of whole school strategy to prevent bullying and procedures for dealing with bullying, the following measures are also in place to **minimise** bullying in boarding.

- All boarders are regularly reminded of what they need to do if they are bullied and of the methods they can use to report any (suspicion of) bullying (Any member of staff including teaching, pastoral and support staff, the Safeguarding Team, the Independent Listener, the School Counsellor, the Prefects ( particularly the Safeguarding Prefect and Peer Mentors), the Heads of House). This information is displayed on a poster in each House.
- All boarders are reminded that they have a duty to report bullying and that if they feel the need to do this anonymously, they can do so by using the worry box. They are also made aware that any report that they make will be treated as confidential and the source will not be revealed. This information is displayed on a poster in each House.
- Each Boarding House has an anonymous “eyes and ears” who are responsible for reporting any bullying in confidence. These should be regularly swapped (every half term).
- Each Boarding House will establish a list of any “pupils at risk” and all House staff (and House Prefects if appropriate) will be made aware of the need to be particularly vigilant to the wellbeing of those pupils. The Housemaster/mistress or Deputy Housemaster/mistress will regularly touch base with them to ensure that they have the opportunity to “open up” and report any issues.
- Where possible, pupils at risk are paired up with other pupils (generally older pupils) who will be tasked with keeping an eye on them and regularly checking in with them.
- All boarding staff are regularly reminded that it cannot be assumed that Prefects, including Heads of House, will not engage in bullying, thus abusing their position of power and the trust that has been put in them.
- All boarding staff are vigilant to the increased risk of initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.
- Parents are reminded that if they suspect their child is being subject to bullying and/or have witnessed any bullying and made aware that they must alert the school with any suspicion that bullying is taking place.



Staff should look out for the following types of bullying behaviour in boarding:

- Intimidation (from older to younger pupils)
- Physical violence
- hazing/initiation rituals
- Coercion (demanding/borrowing money/ food/“borrowing” belongings without permission/asking to use a peer’s credit card
- Damaging/graffiti peer’s property
- Isolation

## **11. STAFF AND PARENTS BULLYING**

The College Staff Handbook makes it very clear to staff that they should not discriminate against, harass, or make any discriminatory offensive remarks against others, including, colleagues and pupils, on grounds of race, nationality, colour, ethnic or national origin, disability, gender, sex, marital status, trans-gender status, sexual orientation, or religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief; and further, members should not harass, discriminate or make discriminatory remarks against others on grounds of age, class, caring responsibilities or other status or personal characteristic in circumstances in which such discrimination may objectively be considered unfair.” Bullying by staff, if proven, will be treated as a disciplinary matter.

The use of and threat of corporal punishment is strictly forbidden as it is a criminal offence.

As part of their safeguarding training, staff are taught to recognise signs of abuse and know that they must report any sign of abuse and any suspicion of parental abuse.

For the protection of both pupils and staff, the College has a policy on physical restraint (See Safeguarding Policy) and searching pupils’ property and bedrooms in the case of boarders (See Behaviour Policy).

The use of corporal punishment on children in schools will ordinarily result in a criminal offence being committed: a threat to use corporal punishment may constitute an assault and the defence of reasonable chastisement is not available to members of staff at schools to a charge of common assault (or other offences) committed in relation to a child being educated at a school. Corporal punishment will automatically give rise to serious safeguarding concerns about a school.