Date: Sep 2026
Next review due: Sep 2027
Responsibility: SMT (NS)

DAME ALLAN'S SCHOOLS

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Anti-bullying advice given to pupils in planners and on notices or posters follows the tenor of this policy but in language appropriate to their age and situation.

1. General Statement

The governing body and staff of Dame Allan's Schools are totally opposed to bullying.

Bullying is wrong and damages children, the bully and the bullied. It can lead to serious and prolonged difficulties for all individuals concerned and possibly lead to lasting psychological harm or even suicide. The aim of this policy is to provide pupils with a safe and secure working environment and a consistent response to any incidents of bullying that occur. It is recognised that all schools are likely to have incidents of bullying at some time. The Schools regard bullying as particularly serious, and firm action will always be taken against it.

Dame Allan's aims to create an atmosphere in which every pupil has a sense of involvement and in which they can develop as a young person of integrity, social conscience and courage. The Schools strive to be a community in which everybody feels valued and safe and within which individual differences are accepted, tolerated and regarded positively. Every pupil has the right to enjoy school, to learn and to be respected. Every pupil has the responsibility to respect others, use common sense and be supportive towards each other. It is the responsibility of everyone in the school to take a stand on bullying. Bullying issues form a key part of the Schools' PSHE programme.

The Schools are committed to an inclusive and anti-discriminatory culture in which racism, prejudice, discrimination, derogatory language and harmful stereotypes are actively challenged. Behaviour which undermines these values will not be tolerated, and action will be taken. Where such behaviour takes place outside school, including on school or public transport, in the community, online or via social media, the Schools will do what is reasonably practical to act against it.

2. What is bullying?

Bullying is unwanted behaviour that may be repeated or may be a one-off incident causing harm, intimidation or offence. It can involve an imbalance of power, although this is not always present. It can happen face-to-face or online and may be physical, verbal, psychological, emotional, sexual, social or discriminatory.

Bullying may be motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of appearance, health conditions, race, religion or belief, culture, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, special educational needs and disability, or family circumstances, including the circumstances of young carers or looked-after children. Bullying may be motivated by actual or perceived differences and can occur for no apparent reason.

Bullying can sometimes amount to child-on-child abuse or violence. This may include physical abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, discriminatory abuse, coercive or controlling behaviour, teenage relationship abuse and online abuse. Where behaviour may constitute child-on-child abuse or violence, it must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Unpleasant actions and unkind or offensive words are not necessarily classed as bullying and may be dealt with through the Behaviour Policy. However, the absence of repetition, intent or an obvious power imbalance does not prevent the Schools from taking action where behaviour is harmful, intimidating, discriminatory or offensive.

Forms of bullying

• Physical – punching, hitting, pushing or other physical aggression.
• Verbal – mocking, ridiculing, tormenting, offensive or racist name-calling, sexist or homophobic remarks, threatening behaviour or derogatory language.
• Indirect/social – spreading rumours, social exclusion, continual put-downs or deliberate isolation.
• Emotional – intimidation, humiliation, manipulation, coercion and exclusion.
•Sexual – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, sexual comments, sexual harassment, sexual violence, sharing or requesting intimate images, upskirting and other harmful sexual behaviour.
• Property-related – taking, damaging or interfering with property.
• Prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.
• Cyberbullying and online abuse.
• Bullying involving generative artificial intelligence, including creating or manipulating images, video, audio or other content to humiliate, threaten, impersonate, sexually exploit or otherwise harm another pupil.
• Bullying involving complicity, including encouraging, facilitating or knowingly supporting the behaviour, or acting as a bystander without reporting serious concerns.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can take place inside and outside school and at any time. It includes the use of phones, email, messaging, online gaming, social media, group chats or other digital technology to harass, threaten, embarrass, intimidate, exclude or target someone. A single online incident may constitute bullying where it causes significant harm, intimidation or offence. Online behaviour can be especially difficult to contain because material can be copied, shared, altered or viewed by a large audience.

Cyberbullying may include flaming, denigration, threatening or abusive messages, exclusion from online groups, outing or disclosure of private information, trickery, hacking or impersonation, harassment, cyber-stalking, image manipulation, deepfakes and AI-generated or altered material.

Protected characteristics and discriminatory bullying

Prejudiced and discriminatory bullying on the basis of protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 is taken particularly seriously. The Schools will actively challenge racist, sexist, ableist, homophobic, religiously prejudiced and other discriminatory behaviour and derogatory language.

Banter, rude, mean and bullying behaviour

Banter, according to the Anti-Bullying Alliance, is the playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks. Behaviour is not considered acceptable banter if someone has asked it to stop, it is hurtful, the target is not laughing, it focuses on someone's insecurities, or the people involved are not friends. The fact that behaviour is described as a joke, banter or an isolated comment does not prevent the Schools from taking action where the behaviour is prejudicial, harmful or causes distress.

Rude behaviour is accidentally saying or doing something hurtful. Mean behaviour is saying or doing something to hurt a person on purpose, perhaps once. Bullying behaviour is unwanted behaviour which may be repeated or may be a one-off incident causing harm, intimidation or offence. The traditional '3 Ps' – purpose, pattern and power – can help staff consider the context, but they are indicators rather than a test that must all be satisfied.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

We treat each pupil as an individual and are mindful of the Equality Act 2010. We will consider and make reasonable adjustments for managing behaviour which is related to a pupil's special educational needs or disabilities. Where challenging behaviour relates to a pupil's disability, reasonable adjustments may need to be made to this policy.

The School is aware that children who are being safeguarded for child protection reasons may sometimes display inappropriate behaviour. Where this is deemed to be the case, reasonable adjustments will be considered in consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. SEND must not, however, be used to excuse harmful behaviour or prevent appropriate safeguarding action.

Bullying outside the school premises

Schools have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises to such an extent as is reasonable. This can relate to bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, including on school or public transport, in town or online.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it can be investigated and acted on, with the impact on the child affected taken into account. The Schools can consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or local authority. Safeguarding concerns must be referred to the DSL irrespective of where the behaviour is alleged to have taken place.

3. Monitoring and Recording

Staff will be alert to signs that a pupil may be experiencing bullying, including withdrawal, anxiety, loss of confidence, mood changes, deterioration in work, attendance difficulties, unexplained injuries or damaged/missing belongings. All staff should report promptly any suspicions of bullying to form teachers/tutors and the relevant pastoral leaders. Where appropriate, findings will be recorded on the bullying log and CPOMS.

Records should be sufficiently detailed to demonstrate the concern raised, information obtained, actions taken, decisions made, the rationale for those decisions, support provided and the outcome of the intervention. Where the concern is a safeguarding matter, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and safeguarding recording

procedures take precedence. The Schools will take into account the needs of pupils with SEND when investigating bullying.

The Role of Pupils

Pupils are encouraged to report incidents of bullying rather than suffering in silence. They can tell the person to stop where it is safe to do so, seek help from a trusted adult, report the matter in person, via email or using Whisper (the Schools app for reporting concerns anonymously or not), and trust the Schools to deal with the incident appropriately.

Pupils are encouraged to be vigilant for bullying affecting other people and to report concerns rather than joining in, encouraging or facilitating the behaviour. Pupils affected by bullying will be given an appropriate opportunity to express their views about what has happened, the support they require and the steps that would help them feel safe. Their views will be considered alongside safeguarding, behavioural and disciplinary considerations.

4. Rights / Responsibilities

All pupils have a right to an education free from bullying. It is the responsibility of all adults in the school community to ensure that the schooling experience of all members of the community takes place in a safe, caring and protective atmosphere. The Principal is responsible to the Governors for determining policies and procedures in conjunction with other school leaders and in discussion with staff, and for ensuring appropriate training is available. The Vice Principal (Pastoral) is responsible for day-to-day management of this policy across Years 7–13 in conjunction with the relevant pastoral leaders. The Head of the Junior School oversees the operation of the policy in the sections of the School for which they are responsible.

All staff will know the policy and procedures, be observant, make timely records, deal with incidents according to policy, report incidents promptly, treat pupils with care and respect, act on reports from pupils or others, and recognise that a bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Staff must report safeguarding concerns to the DSL and must not attempt to determine themselves whether a safeguarding threshold has been met before reporting a concern.

5. Strategies to implement this policy:

All members of Dame Allan's community are made aware of this policy.

Pupils are encouraged to tell an adult if they feel they are being bullied rather than suffering in silence. Staff will deal promptly with any reported case of bullying. Records of bullying and related safeguarding concerns should be sufficiently detailed to demonstrate the concern raised, information obtained, actions taken, decisions made, the rationale for those decisions, support provided and the outcome of the intervention. Where appropriate, records should be maintained on CPOMS as well as the bullying log. Details of the incident will be passed to the relevant form teacher and pastoral leader. The victim(s) will receive support from staff. They will be reassured that their concerns are taken seriously and that appropriate action will be taken as outlined below. Should there be any future incidents, they will be advised to:

- Stay calm
- Be firm and clear, look the bully in the eye and tell them to stop
- Remove themselves from the situation as quickly as possible
- Immediately talk to an adult about what has happened

- Write down their account of what has happened

Pupils who may have witnessed an incident of bullying but not reported it will be given support to empower them if a future incident occurs. Where behaviour may develop into but has not yet become bullying, pastoral staff will meet with the potential perpetrator to discuss a change in behaviour.

Where it is established that bullying has occurred, the following structures allow the bully (bullies) to receive support from staff to prevent any recurrence of the incident/s and to help them to change patterns of behaviour. Responses will be proportionate to the seriousness, frequency, impact and context of the behaviour. Serious incidents may bypass earlier stages.

At any stage, should there be reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm due to bullying, then the matter becomes one of child protection, and so the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy must be referred to.

The Schools will provide appropriate support to pupils who have experienced bullying, recognising that the nature and level of support required will vary according to the individual circumstances and impact on the pupil. This may include access to a trusted member of staff, regular pastoral check-ins, a safe space or agreed point of contact during the school day, increased supervision in areas where concerns have arisen, and appropriate adjustments to seating, groups or routines where necessary. Pupils may also be offered access to counselling or other wellbeing support, help to rebuild friendships, confidence and engagement in school life, and support with any resulting impact on attendance or academic progress. Where appropriate, the Schools will work with parents or carers and other relevant staff to agree a support plan, and will review the situation at agreed intervals to ensure that the pupil feels safe, supported and able to participate fully in school life.

Stages of response

Warning: Where a pupil is beginning to behave in a manner which could be interpreted as bullying, a warning may be given where appropriate. Serious cases may bypass this stage.

Stage 1: Where, after due investigation, the Schools are satisfied that bullying occurred, the pupil will be told why the behaviour is unacceptable, positive strategies will be pursued and parents will be informed. The incident will be recorded and sanctions may be applied in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

Stage 2: If bullying continues, arrangements may be made to minimise contact between the pupils. Parents may be called into the Schools to discuss the situation. The incident will be recorded.

Stage 3: Where there is no improvement, the Principal may, at their discretion, exclude the pupil for a fixed period in accordance with the School's exclusion procedures.

Stage 4: As a last resort, and where it is clear that the pupil endangers the welfare of fellow members of the Schools community, the pupil may be permanently excluded.

These stages are not intended to prevent the Schools taking immediate action in serious cases. The Schools will consider the needs and circumstances of each pupil and may apply reasonable adjustments where required.

6. Prevention / Education

All members of the Dame Allan's community are made aware of this policy. Classroom and form teachers/tutors act as the first port of call. PSHE, assemblies and other elements of the curriculum are used to educate pupils about relationships, respect, bullying, cyberbullying, discriminatory behaviour, online safety, resilience and how to

seek help. Pupils will be taught that racism, prejudice, discriminatory behaviour, sexual harassment and harmful online behaviour are unacceptable. They will also be supported to understand how to be active bystanders and how to report concerns safely.

Places and times which provide an opportunity for bullying to occur will be identified and monitored. The Schools will use bullying and behaviour data to identify hotspots, repeat incidents and patterns affecting particular groups of pupils and will adapt supervision, pastoral provision and preventative education accordingly.

Staff training will include the principles of this policy, safeguarding responsibilities and appropriate responses to bullying, discrimination, child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment and online abuse. The Schools will invest in specialist skills where appropriate, including to understand the needs of pupils with SEND and pupils experiencing prejudice or discrimination.

Prevention of cyberbullying and online abuse

The Schools may impose disciplinary sanctions for misuse or attempted misuse of the internet in accordance with the Behaviour Policy. Pupils are taught about safe use of social networking, group chats and other online platforms, including blocking, reporting, removing contacts and protecting personal information. The Schools acknowledge that online bullying may occur outside school and may still have a significant impact on school life. Concerns will be investigated and, where appropriate, referred to the DSL. Filtering and monitoring arrangements and the Acceptable Use Policy will support prevention and identification of harmful online activity.

Electronic devices

In response to an allegation of cyberbullying, searches of electronic devices may be undertaken in accordance with the Behaviour Policy and the School's current search and confiscation procedures. Where a search identifies safeguarding concerns, the Schools will follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The Schools will keep an appropriate record of searches carried out, including the result and actions taken. Where material may constitute evidence of a criminal offence, the Schools will preserve evidence and seek advice as appropriate.

Sexual bullying, sexual harassment and sexual violence

Staff should take the expected steps as with any other bullying incident – listening, reassuring, supporting and recording – but must also consider whether the matter is a safeguarding issue. Sexual bullying may include sexual harassment, sexual violence, harmful sexual behaviour, unwanted sexual comments or contact, coercive or controlling behaviour, teenage relationship abuse, sharing or requesting nude or semi-nude images, image-based abuse, upskirting or AI-generated sexual images. Any concern that may amount to child-on-child sexual harassment or sexual violence must be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and managed in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Staff should not investigate beyond what is necessary to establish immediate safety and report the concern.

7. Early Years

The Early Years Department actively promotes and explicitly encourages positive values of mutual respect and concern for each other through weekly PSHE assemblies, Golden Rules, classroom time, circle time and informal discussion. In the event of an observed or reported instance of bullying, the class teacher will investigate/mediate and resolve. Notes will be made and retained. If the matter cannot be dealt with or is sufficiently serious, it will be passed to the Head of Early Years, Deputy Head or Head. Parents will be kept updated as appropriate.

8. Co-operating with Parents and Carers

The Schools will work with parents when dealing with bullying. Parents/carers concerned that their child might be being bullied or may be involved in bullying should contact the child's form teacher or Head of Year as soon as possible. Concerns will be taken seriously and investigated sensitively. The Schools will avoid unnecessary identification of pupils and will use information with discretion while recognising its safeguarding responsibilities.

Parents and carers will be informed and involved as appropriate. The Schools will discuss with parents how they can work together to stop bullying and support the pupil. Parents are encouraged to use the Schools' complaints procedure if they feel that their concerns have not been addressed properly. Parents and carers are also expected to model respectful behaviour and to work constructively with the Schools. Bullying or harassment of staff by parents, carers or other members of the school community will not be tolerated and will be addressed through the Schools appropriate policies and procedures.

9. Review and Evaluation

The policy will be reviewed and evaluated regularly to identify whether the strategies are working. This will take place at least each half term and will include review of the bullying log and relevant pastoral, behaviour and safeguarding information. The Schools will analyse data to identify patterns, repeat incidents, hotspots, protected-characteristic trends and any disproportionate impact on particular groups of pupils. The effectiveness of interventions will be evaluated, and findings will inform supervision, pastoral provision, PSHE, staff training and other preventative measures.

The policy will be formally reviewed annually, or sooner where changes in legislation, statutory guidance, inspection expectations or School practice require this.

Related policies and guidance

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Whole School Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- SEN Policy
- Sex and Relationships Policy
- Whole School Policy on the Acceptable Use of Electronic Devices and Information Technology Systems
- Complaints Policy
- Home-School Contract

The policy has been reviewed with reference to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and current Department for Education guidance on preventing bullying.