

Durham Youth Council Anti Bullying Policy

Introduction

Durham Youth Council (DYC) Anti Bullying Policy links to, and is supported by DYC other policies and procedures, and should be used along side DYC Safeguarding, Privacy and Social Media policies.

Bullying is defined as “behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally”. (DfE “Preventing and Tackling Bullying”, July 2017). Bullying can include: name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; taking belongings; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours. This includes the same unacceptable behaviours expressed online, sometimes called online or cyberbullying. This can include sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos. Bullying can be a form of peer on peer abuse and can be abusive; it can cause severe and adverse effects on children’s emotional development. Bullying may be prejudice or hate – related. The school recognises its role in promoting an understanding and inclusive environment for all in terms of ‘protected characteristics’.

Aims

DYC recognises that bullying, especially if left unaddressed can have a devastating impact on individuals; it can create a barrier to engagement and have serious consequences for mental wellbeing. By effectively preventing and tackling bullying, DYC can help to create a safe, disciplined environment, where Young People are able to meet their full potential. One of our aims is to lead our Young People towards an understanding of their own feelings, as well as the feelings and sensitivities of others. Promoting ‘emotionally literate’ Young People includes helping them to have empathy for others and promoting these values throughout our Council. Our other aims include promoting respect for the dignity and worth of all members of DYC, and a tolerance of diversity. We also aim to safeguard our Young People and staff and ensure they are provided with a safe, caring environment.

Principles

DYC will work to ensure that all Young People, staff, parents/carers are aware that:

- ❖ Young People have the right to be safe and that bullying is unacceptable.
- ❖ Informing or reporting issues of bullying is the right thing to do.
- ❖ Clear procedures will be followed when bullying does occur and that problems will be addressed, as appropriate. Incidents will be investigated and taken seriously and, where appropriate, consequences will be enforced and support for individuals will be implemented. DYC will take appropriate, proportionate and reasonable action in line with DYC existing policies. Incidents brought to DYC attention, which involves or impacts Young People we work with, even when they are not on DYC premises, including virtually or online will be considered in the same way.
- ❖ Responses to allegations of bullying will be made with due regard for considerations of safeguarding and confidentiality/information sharing. Any bullying issues involving safeguarding concerns will be referred to the Safeguarding Lead.
- ❖ In cases where parents/carers chose to report issues to the Police the Policy of the DYC is to cooperate with any subsequent Police investigation by sharing with them any relevant information held by DYC.
- ❖ Other agencies may be consulted or involved, such as the police (if a criminal offence has been committed) or other local services including early help or children’s social care (if a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm).

- ❖ A clear and precise account of the incident will be recorded by DYC in accordance with existing procedures. This will include recording appropriate details regarding decisions and actions.

Implementation

DYC will strive to:

- ❖ Provide good role models of behaviour throughout Youth Council community.
- ❖ Address bullying as a regular theme when appropriate and include this theme in our Youth Council Handbook and as part of our Code of Conduct.
- ❖ Raise awareness about bullying.
- ❖ Use our time to provide opportunities for positive relationships to form between younger and older Young People.
- ❖ Make our Young People aware of who to report any concerns about bullying behaviour.
- ❖ Where appropriate, make referrals to other professionals.
- ❖ Monitor the use of social media (whereby DYC are responsible), as outlined in our Social Media Policy to ensure these facilities are not misused to bully others.

Young People, parents/carers, and staff will be informed of DYC anti-bullying policy and procedures.

Young People who have been bullied will be supported by:

- ❖ Reassuring the Young Person and providing continuous support.
- ❖ Offering a swift opportunity to discuss the experience with the designated safeguarding lead, or a member of staff of their choice.
- ❖ Being advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how respond to concerns and build resilience as appropriate.
- ❖ Working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- ❖ Providing ongoing support; this may include: working and speaking with staff, and engaging with parents and carers.
- ❖ Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this could include support through Early Help or Specialist Children's Services, or support through Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Young People who have perpetrated the bullying will be helped by:

- ❖ Discussing what happened, establishing the concern and the need to change.
- ❖ Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the Young Person.
- ❖ Providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions.
- ❖ If online, requesting that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to service provider.
- ❖ Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this may include involvement from the Police or referrals to Early Help, Specialist Children's Services, or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) as appropriate

Cyberbullying

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, DYC will:

- ❖ Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.
- ❖ Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied and, where appropriate, work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.
- ❖ Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation. Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include looking at use of the DYC systems; identifying and interviewing possible witnesses; contacting the service provider and the police or school, if necessary
- ❖ Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation. This may include supporting reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content.
- ❖ Confiscating and searching Young People's electronic devices, where appropriate, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law and DfE guidance 'Searching, screening and confiscation at

school' and Childnet Cyberbullying guidance to ensure that the DYC powers are used proportionately and lawfully.

- ❖ Request the deletion of locally-held content and content posted online if they contravene DYC Code of Conduct.

Provide information to staff, parents and pupils regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online. This may include advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply; providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists; helping those involved to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain.

This policy is based on Preventing and Tackling Bullying guidance provided by DfE. It has taken into account, guidance from DfE in regard to keeping children safe in education. These can be found on www.gov.uk website.