

ANTI-BULLYING AND BEHAVIOUR POLICY

NB: if you have a concern about the welfare of a student please speak to David Morley (Designated Lead for Safeguarding and Mental Health Lead), Jennifer Mayne (Coach and Deputy Designated Lead for Safeguarding), or Jonathan Bourne (Chief Executive Officer) immediately – contact details inside

Policy Owner: David Morley

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1. Our commitment and values

This policy takes into consideration the statutory guidance within "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (version September 2026).

It sets out what Damar will do to prevent, challenge and tackle all forms of bullying, to create a culture of kindness and respect that permeates every aspect of our provision, and to ensure that this commitment is shared by all staff.

Research shows that bullying can have a significant impact on those who experience it. It is vital that we can identify when bullying is taking place, that we have procedures in place to prevent it and that we act quickly when we receive a concern.

We will not tolerate any form of bullying or accept, for example, that hurtful language or 'jokes' are simply 'banter'. Our aim is to identify intimidating and/or threatening behaviours and abuse, whether face to face or online/cyberbullying, which may include sending offensive, upsetting and/or inappropriate messages by phone, text, messenger, or through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps and the sending of offensive or degrading photos or videos.

Bullying is a form of abuse which can be emotionally damaging and cause severe adverse effects, it can create a barrier to learning and may have a serious effect on mental wellbeing.

Our safeguarding duty underpins everything that we do at Damar. We promote a healthy, safe and supportive environment for all our students regardless of age, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation and will take all reports of bullying extremely seriously (our Equality and Diversity Policy supports this).

2. A shared definition and recognition of bullying

All staff must understand a shared definition of what bullying is:

"*The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online..*"

Anti-Bullying Alliance – Definition of bullying

There are various ways to describe bullying, "direct bullying" and "indirect bullying". These terms refer to the means or method of the bullying. Both have the intention to hurt/harm the targeted victim and both can have short and long-term effects.

In cases of "direct bullying" often:

- the behaviour is directed at the victim
- the identity of the bully is usually known
- the bullying is overt to the victim and witnesses
- there is clear evidence of the bullying that has taken place

Indirect bullying may involve actions which are intended to cause psychological harm by damaging the victim's:

- reputation with their peers
- relationships
- self-esteem

Indirect bullies will generally be anonymous, conceal their behaviour and attempt to isolate the victim from their peers. Examples of indirect bullying may include, but are not limited to:

- the spreading of rumours or gossip
- telling peers to ignore or not to associate with the victim
- sharing inappropriate/embarrassing photos or videos of the victim through IT/social media
- intentionally excluding the victim

In summary, experiences of bullying might include:

- Physical – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, pinching, etc.
- Verbal – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling.
- Emotional – tormenting, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidation, exclusion, manipulation and coercion.
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate photos/video content
- Online/cyber – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending inappropriate/hurtful text messages, social exclusion

NB The Department for Education guidance document "Preventing and tackling bullying, 2017" https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying states the following regarding the law in respect of bullying:

"***Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986."***

3. Acceptable behaviours

Our aim is to promote a culture of mutual respect, empathy and kindness. We expect our students:

- to be respectful towards our staff and to other students
- to value the opinions and beliefs of others
- to demonstrate empathy for the feelings and abilities of other students
- support Equality and Diversity

- to discourage bullying or harassment of other students and to report any concerns that it is taking place
- make positive contributions to group training sessions
- demonstrate commitment to learning

Our staff must be alert to signs of any unacceptable behaviours which clearly conflict with the aims of this policy and to refer them to the Designated Leads for Safeguarding, as stated in Section 6 of this document and described in full in our policy for Safeguarding and Promoting Student Welfare.

4. Organisational responsibilities

Our Directors accept overall responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our students and delegate specific responsibilities to individual members of staff as appropriate.

All staff with delegated responsibilities receive the necessary information, training and support to carry out their roles.

5. Individuals with specific responsibilities

Designated Lead for Safeguarding and Mental Health Lead (MHFA England): David Morley, (tel: 07960 888149)

Coach and Deputy Designated Lead for Safeguarding: Jennifer Mayne (tel: 07891 154701)

Raising student awareness and initial reporting: all staff, specific emphasis on the Coaching Team.

6. Reporting bullying

Bullying and child-on-child abuse are Safeguarding concerns and must be reported and managed in line with our policy for Safeguarding and Promoting Student Welfare:

- The 5 Rs: Recognition, Response, Reporting, Recording and Referral

All staff are trained to recognise unacceptable/bullying behaviours and are sensitive to any signs for concern.

As soon as they have a concern, all staff are expected to pass the information to their Designated Leads for Safeguarding, who will then decide on the most appropriate next steps. In some cases, issues may need to be discussed at Director level before a course of action is agreed.

7. Signs and indicators

Our staff must be aware of and sensitive to the following signs which might indicate a bullying concern (this is not an exhaustive list):

- the student becomes withdrawn
- repeated absence from training/work
- there is a deterioration in the standard of work
- they have few or no friends and appear isolated
- there is poor engagement with the training programme/studies

- low self-esteem
- depression
- anxiety
- self-harm
- thoughts and possible attempts of suicide

8. Our response

It is made explicitly clear to all staff that there is often a very fine line that distinguishes acceptable behaviour/words/actions from bullying behaviour. We will treat every report of bullying very seriously and:

- provide training to our staff regarding all forms of bullying and ensure that they recognise the signs that indicate it is taking place
- ensure that our students receive quality training and guidance through the personal development curriculum regarding the risks that exist online and how to control/avoid them (supported by our Online Safety and Remote Learning Policy)
- be mindful of the places and spaces that bullying can happen (contextualised safeguarding), such as in the workplace, online, in learner forums, during webinars, WhatsApp groups, Facebook, social media, relationships in and out of work
- listen to our students to gain a real understanding of their lived experience
- ensure that our staff promote positive behaviours that deter and prevent bullying
- recognise that some students (which may include under 18s, those with additional needs or disabilities, LGBT+, young carers, looked after children, minority groups) are more vulnerable and most likely to be impacted by bullying
- identify, intervene and tackle bullying behaviour appropriately and quickly
- make our students aware that we will respond sensitively to concerns regarding bullying
- explain the role of the 'bystander' and positive action that can be taken if they witness a bullying incident or become aware/hear of a bullying situation and how they can demonstrate that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated
- work as one team to promote and support our anti-bullying policy through induction, compulsory training, through OneFile announcements, through coaching visits and reviews, through our documentation for recruitment and enrolment and through our marketing
- respond quickly to any issues raised regarding our management of a bullying concern, in line with our Complaints Policy
- engage with outside agencies where appropriate and proportionate to do so. Where there is a risk of harm, or where illegal content has been shared online, we may engage with the police and/or other social services teams

On receipt of a concern relating to bullying:

- we will first seek assurance that the victim is not at risk of immediate harm and then provide appropriate support
- the Designated Lead(s) for Safeguarding will investigate the concerns and interview all those who are involved and take into consideration the potential involvement of a wider group

9. Record keeping

As previously stated, bullying is a safeguarding concern and, as is the case for all other concerns, reports will be recorded on our Safeguarding Log. This allows us to:

- monitor incidents of bullying
- to identify where there are recurring issues within specific contexts
- to establish patterns regarding which students are likely to be most vulnerable within our provision
- to evaluate the impact of the policy

10. Documents supporting the Policy

Other documents supporting this policy are:

- Self-assessment report
- Damar Employee Handbook
- Safeguarding and Promoting Student Welfare Policy
- Professional Standards Guide
- Health and Safety Policy
- Prevent Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education – Part One must be read by all staff (version, September 2025)