

Merley First School

Anti-Bullying Policy



Rationale.

At Merley First School we believe that every student and member of staff has the right to feel safe and protected from discrimination or threat. We aim, as a school, to foster a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety. In our school the aim is to create a climate where bullying will not be tolerated. We will work towards the elimination of any form of bullying by encouraging the active participation of pupils, staff, parents and governors. We will do this by operating tight systems, educating our families and developing our children's understanding, resilience, self-esteem and respect for others. In this way we hope to protect all school members and give our young people the very best chance of a safe and happy life. We will do all we can to prevent bullying, by developing a school ethos in which it is regarded as unacceptable. We aim to make all those connected with the school aware of our opposition to bullying, and we make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying in our schools.

We describe bullying as deliberate harassment or an aggressive act which causes hurt to another over a period of time and repeatedly where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can be carried out by a group or individuals.

Merley First School is part of Wimborne Academy Trust and as such this policy reflects the Trust Behaviour Policy.

Definition of bullying.

Bullying may hurt, threaten or frighten someone.

It may be

- persistent
- repeated over time
- intentional
- planned

Bullying may take the form of

Physical abuse: i.e. - hitting

- kicking, hair pulling
- or other ways of hurting the body

Verbal abuse: i.e. - name calling

- targeted taunts and insults that may reflect on the individual or their wider family, or on a minority group within school
- teasing or threats that hurt you inside and make you afraid
- people picking on you and making you feel like a joke has gone too far

Other threatening behaviour: i.e.

- threatening looks
- interference with property
- note passing
- inciting others to support the bully in an active or passive way
- behaviour intended to manipulate others
- behaviour intended to make the individual feel powerless to stop or report the bullying

Electronic or Cyber Bullying: i.e.

- unwanted text, e-mail or instant messages
- messages posted on social networking sites, in chat rooms and on blogs (see e-safety policy).

A bully is a person who makes life distressing for others by deliberately and persistently picking on them for no apparent reason.

A victim is a person who is harmed by the deliberate behaviour of others and who is unable to prevent or stop the harmful behaviour.

The Department of Education 2011 definition is:

'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 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), derive 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 March 2014: Preventing and tackling bullying - advice for school leaders, staff and governing bodies

The Anti-Bullying Alliance definition is:

What Is Bullying

What some consider teasing, others can see as bullying. There is no legal definition for bullying but it is usually understood as repeated physically or/and emotionally hurtful behaviour. It can take many forms, including:

Physical bullying; *it involves hitting, kicking and other types of physical harm including destruction of one's possessions*

Verbal bullying; *it encompasses name-calling, teasing, intimidating and spreading hurtful rumours*

Cyber-bullying; *it involves sending harassing, threatening and humiliating text messages, emails, posts, blogs, etc. as well as spreading hurtful rumours via the Internet and calling on the phone at inappropriate hours*

Children will have rows, friends will 'fall out', have arguments or 'bust ups' and sometimes friendships end. Children may get angry with each other and occasionally this may turn into verbal rows or even physical fights. Bullying is different. It is crucial that in applying the definitions we make a clear distinction between relational conflict (friendship problems) and bullying behaviour.

Aims of this policy.

Each individual, whether pupil, member of staff or volunteer helper has the right to work in an environment where they feel emotionally secure, has the opportunity to develop good self esteem and feel confident of protection by the school from bullying.

Schools owe a duty of care to protect pupils from bullying as part of their responsibility to provide a safe and secure environment. Equally employers have a duty to ensure that the health, safety and welfare of employees at work are protected and to provide them with a safe working environment. Therefore we would aim to encourage good, honest, open communication at all levels in work teams, and create a culture where colleagues trust and encourage each other.

As a First School we value greatly our role in enabling the children to develop the skills they need to socialise successfully with one another. By their very nature young children will sometimes treat one another in a less than appropriate way. It is both the responsibility of school and home to use such incidents to help children learn right from wrong. Working in partnership with parents can help to achieve this aim.

Roles and responsibilities.

The Head teacher and Governors are responsible for ensuring that all staff are aware of Government Guidance on behaviour management and tackling bullying, the individual school behaviour and anti-bullying policies and how to implement them.

Each individual is encouraged to accept responsibility for their own behaviour. This is achieved by recognising and understanding the nature of bullying and the problems it creates.

Adults are very influential as role models for children. The ways adults in school or in their families interact with each other are noticed by children. In school adults will always aim to model positive attitudes and behaviour to others.

The promotion of sensitivity, consistency and careful communication when dealing with any aspect of less than acceptable behaviour will help to prevent bullying tendencies.

Why do children bully?

Children bully because:

- They want to be 'in' with the cool gang.
- It feels like fun - they don't realise how much it hurts.
- They dislike or are jealous of someone.
- It makes them feel powerful or respected.
- It gets them what they want (sweets, money).
- They are bullied themselves and are taking out their hurt and anger on someone who won't fight back.
- They are having problems in their life that are making them feel bad.

REMEMBER: People who are happy with themselves do not need to bully other people.

Prevention.

At Merley First School we follow the principles below to help create an environment that encourages positive relationships not bullying:

- Creating an ethos of good behaviour where pupils and staff treat each other with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave.
- Creating an inclusive and safe environment where pupils can openly discuss the cause of their bullying, without fear of further bullying or discrimination.
- Proactively gathering intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict to help develop strategies to help prevent bullying occurring in the first place. (For example, talking to children about issues of difference in lessons and listening carefully to children's concerns)
- Encouraging open discussions about differences between people that could motivate bullying in PSHCE lessons, assemblies or dedicated events or projects.
- Ensuring all staff are aware of the particular issues relating to pupils with special educational needs or disabilities and seeking specialist advice when necessary.
- Embedding Social, Emotional Aspects of learning through SEAL structured scheme of work.
- Communicating our anti-bullying policy to pupils, parents and staff in a clear and user-friendly way.
- Use of 'circle time' by all teachers to highlight problems and encourage suggestions from pupils of preventative measures and to assist building good individual and 'class' self esteem.
- Each class has two elected representatives on the school council. They can bring concerns and suggestions from their class circle time discussions to the school council meetings.

- During November each year the issues are explored fully during Anti-bullying week. All classes use lessons and activities from the SEAL Rainbow pack to support this learning.

Supporting staff in their role.

Behaviour and anti-bullying policies are made clear to all staff both as part of the induction for new staff members and at staff meetings. A regular focus is given on the behaviour policy and behaviour agreements or charters as each new school year starts.

The use of sanctions will be in line with the school behaviour policy.

Specific support and training is sought regarding specific forms of bullying e.g. E-safety.

In the case of employees where there is perceived bullying the staff report this to the Head Teacher.

Procedures.

- Always listen.
- Always hear both sides of the story.
- Always follow it up.
- Always continue to monitor.

Opportunities throughout the school calendar are used to raise awareness of our students to the negative consequences of bullying. These include:

- Anti-Bullying Week which promotes strategies to reduce bullying.
- Whole School Assemblies
- PSHCE lessons (Jigsaw)
- The use of Peer Mediators who help to resolve friendship issues before bullying occurs.

All incidents of bullying are required to be monitored by the Head Teacher and reported in the termly report to Governors. The Head Teacher may support teachers by investigating incidents of alleged bullying in more depth if required i.e. if parents or teachers ask for support.

All staff take all forms of bullying seriously, and intervene to prevent incidents from taking place. They keep records of all incidents that happen in school in their class log books and report these to the Head Teacher.

When something that is perceived to be bullying first comes to light it needs to be fully investigated - by listening to all those involved. This may include not just the target of bullying and those using bullying behaviour, but also bystanders - children and adults. Any member of staff may be the first person to investigate. This person will need to ensure all sides of the story are listened to. This is recorded in the class log books.

Sometimes issues can be dealt with at that point in time and the usual consequences in the behaviour policy applied. This will be the case if the investigation reveals that the perceived bullying does not fit the definition of bullying. If a child has been physically hurt the class teacher tries their best to tell the parents about any incident on the same day.

Where investigation reveals something of a more persistent or serious nature this is recorded in the class log book. This helps to ensure consistent monitoring of individual/individuals. This is monitored by the Head Teacher. There will also be verbal communication of the investigation to the relevant staff such as Head Teacher, SLT and class teacher. In instances of bullying it is important to consider the involvement of parents of both victim and bully at an early stage. This helps everyone know what action will be taken. It is very important that careful consideration is given to achieving a balance between what needs to be passed on, and the need to maintain confidentiality. It is strongly advised to speak with staff from the pupils previous academic year. When incidents of bullying occur, we apply disciplinary measures (in line with our behaviour policy) to pupils who bully in order to show clearly that their behaviour is wrong. Such measures are applied

fairly, consistently and reasonably taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that the children may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable children.

An employee who is being bullied may be able to deal with the problem by personal action, through a colleague or representative, through their line-manager or directly through the Head Teacher. If these informal steps fail or if the bullying is potentially serious misconduct the victim can make a formal complaint.

Once the case has been thoroughly investigated and it is apparent that a form of bullying has taken place, investigating staff should make clear to the perpetrator (s) that what they have done is wrong and hurtful. Attempts may be made to resolve the problem through mediation or conflict resolution but this will depend on the severity of the incident. Staff should encourage the bully to appreciate the hurt they have caused and hopefully learn from the incident. It should be made clear to all parties the sanctions that will be imposed and the reasons for these particular sanctions. At all times the safety and sensitivity of the victim is paramount.

In particular cases it may be deemed necessary to seek assistance from external agencies, such as the Educational Psychologist or CAMHS to support either the victim or the bully.

Once decisions and sanctions, if appropriate, have been taken, the school will follow up with the victim and the bully at a later date to ensure no recurrence has occurred and that a resolution has been made. The timetable will depend on the nature and severity of the incident. It will be discussed with both victim and perpetrator so all parties are clear as to the outcome of any possible review.

Data collection.

In line with the Poole Anti-Bullying Strategy 2016-18 the school will complete the Local Authority survey on an annual basis which ask for information about incidents of bullying and prejudice.

This will ensure that Schools/other organisations collecting their own data together with the data provided by an annual survey will:

- Ensure a better understanding of the nature and incidence of bullying
- Enable action to be taken based on trends, hotspots and other analysis
- Demonstrate commitment to the Equality Act 2010 one aim of which is to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act'.
- Demonstrate transparency and provide data about performance in how bullying is tackled
- Evidence the effectiveness of behaviour management plans as required by Ofsted

Monitoring and evaluation.

Monitoring of the 'Bullying Incident Record Folder', Bullying and/or Prejudice Incident forms and Accident Book will give an indication of issues and how they have been dealt with and then continue to be followed up. The Bullying Incident Record Folder and the Accident Book are monitored half-termly by the Head Teacher. Any reported incident will be acted on by an adult who receives the report using the agreed line management process. Parental comments recorded from individual meetings or questionnaires will be an indicator for meeting needs.

Partnership with parents, schools, community.

The anti-bullying policy is linked to our behaviour policy. This is promoted at parents' evenings and reflected in the Home School Agreement.

Parents are offered support where it is felt this will benefit their child to deal with issues in their life which seem problematic for them, for example, by the use of the Pastoral Support Worker, Inclusion Leader or Family Outreach Worker. Parents are sign-posted to sources of specific or general advice via the information board and leaflets in school foyer.

A summary of our Anti-Bullying Policy is available to all families in a format designed to be shared and discussed between children and parents/carers. This is usually given out on entry to school and when requested. Our Anti-Bullying Policy is available on the web-site.

Consultation.

The school council will create and review a child-friendly leaflet explaining what bullying is and what children can do about it. This will be reviewed annually and shared with parents, with opportunity for feedback to be given. As part of the School Council Annual Questionnaire children will be asked if they feel safe in school and if there are adults around them to whom they feel confident reporting any worries or concerns they might have. This policy is made available in its entirety on the school website, with opportunity for parents and other stakeholders to provide feedback about it via email.

Date: January 2017

Date Approved by LGB	Minute No.	Date to be reviewed
		March 2019