



# Merrydale Infant School Anti - Bullying Policy

# Merrydale Infants School

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *TELLING* school. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff, parents or a trusted adult.

### What Is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. It is different from other types of aggressive behaviour because it is defined as something that happens more than once and is directed specifically at an individual or group.

We define bullying as physical or verbally aggressive behaviour that occurs 'Several Times on Purpose'. The school uses this definition to help children understand the seriousness of bullying compared to other unacceptable behaviours and provides the '**STOP**' acronym that leads to children knowing they should 'Start Telling Other People'

Bullying can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (eg hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber - All areas of internet ,such as email & internet chat room misuse
  - Mobile threats by text messaging & call
  - Misuse of associated technology , i.e. camera & video facilities

Perpetrators may use different pretexts as the basis of their bullying, basing their comments or actions on:

- The religious background or faith of the person bullied
- A disability, perceived physical difficulty or Special Educational Need.
- The race of the victim: eg racist name calling, taunts, graffiti or gestures
- The sexuality of the victim: eg homophobic bullying

Bullying can also take place through third person involvement ie another person being encouraged to take part in any of the behaviours above.

All staff should also be aware to the possibility of a member of staff bullying a child. Should anyone suspect that this is taking place this should be reported immediately to the Headteacher. If the Headteacher is suspected of bullying, the matter should be reported to the LA.

### **Bullying is not:**

- It is important to understand that bullying is not odd occasion falling out with friends, name calling, arguments or when the occasional 'joke' is played on someone. Children do sometimes fall out or say things because they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise it is not classed as bullying. It is an important part of a child's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, the odd name calling or childish prank. We all have to learn how to deal with these situations and develop social skills to repair relationships.
- **Bullying is defined as Several Times on Purpose**

### **Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?**

- Bullying hurts.
- No one deserves to be a victim of bullying.
- Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.
- Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.
- Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

## **Objectives of this Policy**

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

## **Signs and Symptoms**

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay someone who has asked them for money)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises

- comes home hungry (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated

## Procedures - Reporting

### Children

- Children are encouraged to 'Start Telling Other People'
- They are encouraged to report possible bullying to any member of staff they trust, a friend or a member of their family.
- Children who are 'bystanders' are encouraged to support their peers by reporting any suspected bullying.

### Staff

- All incidents of suspected bullying will be dealt with by the member of staff it is reported to, usually the class teacher.
- All staff are responsible for the health and well being of the children and have a duty to respond seriously to any claim of bullying.
- If they are unable to investigate the matter must be **referred immediately** to a senior member of staff.
- The Headteacher will also be informed and, if bullying is confirmed it will be logged in the school Bullying Log which is kept by the PSHE Co-ordinator – all instances of bullying will be recorded and monitored for patterns of behaviour.
- Teaching Assistants should report to a classteacher or senior manager if they have any concerns about potential bullying.

- Lunchtime supervisors report to the classteachers and the Headteacher where there are any concerns about children's behaviour.

## **Parents**

- Parents are encouraged to share any concerns with their child's classteacher or a member of senior management.
- In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
- If necessary and appropriate, particularly if behaviour in school is repeated out of school, police will be consulted.

## **Procedures – Outcomes**

### **Victim**

- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated immediately and the bullying stopped.
- Victims will be reassured that they have done nothing to deserve the bullying and that what may have happened is not their 'fault'
- The victim will be consulted with on how to rebuild relationships with the perpetrator if they want to do this.
- Referral to the school Nurture Team may be considered appropriate.
- Following investigations, staff will periodically 'check in' with children that have been the victim of bullying to ensure that the child feels happy and secure at school.

### **Perpetrator**

- Most importantly, the perpetrator should be helped to realise that bullying will not be tolerated, that it must stop immediately and that there can be no re-occurrence
- Children are helped to reflect upon their actions and to empathise with how the bullied child may feel.
- Children that have bullied are supported to modify their behaviour – this may be through a behaviour chart, structured lunchtimes including pastoral support e.g. GAP and involvement of parents to reinforce the unacceptable nature of bullying.
- Other consequences may take place such as loss of other 'privileges' in school.
- Temporary exclusion for one or more days may be considered if appropriate.

- After incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

## **Parents**

- Parents / carers of both victim and perpetrator will be kept informed throughout the process.
- Close contact will be maintained with the victim's parents or carers to ensure that the victim adjusts positively back to school life as quickly as possible.
- Parent views will always be considered but the school will stress that wherever possible reconciliation will be considered in order to provide clear resolution for all concerned while not condoning the bullying.

## **Reconciliation**

- The perpetrator will be asked at a suitable point to genuinely apologise, in writing or in person
- Children will be encouraged to reconcile any issues over a period of time so that any injustice can be rectified.

## **Procedures – Recording**

- All serious behaviour incidents are recorded in the School's Bullying Log and are periodically checked to see if there are patterns of behaviour that may be regarded as bullying.
- Concerns about children are recorded by class teachers on low-level incident forms.
- Definite incidents of bullying are recorded in the 'Bullying Log' which is used to highlight repeat incidents.
- The Senior Management Team are responsible for co-ordinating the recording system, liaising with class teachers and other staff to ensure that incidents of bullying are not missed.
- Periodic analysis of the Bullying Log by the PSHE Co-ordinator ie numbers of incidents, numbers of children involved, analysis of lunchtime detentions etc will help staff to measure the success of our policies of poor or challenging behaviour

## Prevention

We aim to help children to prevent bullying.

The school has a range of strategies in place to help children work and behave co-operatively in order to minimise the possibility of bullying taking place.

- We take part in the National Anti-bullying week in November each year, involving all children in discussions about acceptable behaviours and ensuring all children know what procedures should be followed.
- The school encourages circle time to provide children with more opportunities to discuss their feelings and attitudes and to help create a positive climate in school and encourage co-operative behaviour
- The school has a clear behaviour policy that rewards positive behaviour. The school rules are clear and straightforward and focus on positive attitudes.
- The school takes a pro-active stance towards challenging behaviour at lunchtime; we have a lunchtime provision system – GAP - which ensures that children at risk of aggressive behaviour are closely monitored through a structured lunchtime timetable.
- The school works closely with the local police to make sure that any incidents outside school are reported to the school so that children involved can then be monitored inside school as appropriate.
- The school has a system of playground buddies, encouraging children to support each other. Children are encouraged to help perpetrators and victims reflect upon their actions.
- Both children and parents are made aware of how to use the internet safely and of the possibilities of cyber bullying.
- **Above all children are encouraged to ‘Start Telling Other People’ if they feel they are being bullied or if someone they know is being bullied.**