

Merton Bank Primary School



Anti-bullying Policy

Approved by Full Governing Body on _____

To be reviewed on or before _____

Signed _____

Chair of Governors

Signed _____

Headteacher

July 2024



Merton Bank Primary School

Anti-bullying Policy

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Anti-bullying Policy

1.0 Rationale behind the policy

Bullying, in any form, will not be tolerated at our school. At Merton Bank Primary School we are committed to creating a positive and safe learning environments for all. Bullying is present to a greater or lesser extent in all institutions. All members of a school community deserve the right to feel valued, equal and respected and be able to come to school without fear. Bullying has a serious effect on a pupil's self-esteem, emotional and mental health. This prevents them from developing their full potential and can seriously affect their life chances. Our school uses this definition:

'Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.'

Department for Education 2011

2.0 Aims of the Anti-Bullying Policy

- To develop a nurturing, positive and safe learning environment in which bullying including child on child abuse will not be tolerated.
- To promote inclusion, mutual agreement, self-esteem and self-worth in order to meet the physical, emotional and mental health needs of all members of the school community.
- To raise the standards of behaviour and levels of achievement of all.
- To raise the awareness of bullying including child on child abuse.
- To ensure that all staff, parents and children are aware of this policy and fulfil their obligations in relation to it.

3.0 Definition of bullying

Bullying may be defined as the intentional abuse of power by an individual or group with the intent and motivation to cause distress to another individual or group. It can be:

- **Physical:** hitting, stealing or hiding belongings, sexual assault.
- **Verbal or written:** name calling, insulting, racist remarks, offensive sexual remarks, taunting, mocking, threatening language, producing offensive graffiti.
- **Indirect/emotional:** spreading nasty stories, excluding from groups, forced joining of groups, graffiti, defacing property, displaying literature or materials of a racist, sexist or pornographic nature.
- **Sexual Violence:** Staff should be aware of sexual violence and the fact that children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 including:
 - Rape
 - Assault by penetration
 - Sexual Assault
- **Sexual Harassment:** This refers to 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur on or offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment. Sexual harassment can include:
 - Sexual comments
 - Sexual 'jokes' or taunting
 - Physical behaviour
 - Online sexual harassment including 'sexting' and 'upskirting'

- **E-bullying:** using web pages, offensive or abusive text or email messages, sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet. Online sexual harassment includes
 - Non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos:
 - Sexualised online bullying
 - Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including social media; and
 - Sexual exploitation: coercion and threats.

Cyber bullying is illegal under the Malicious Communication Act 1988. The Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) gives support with this. Whilst there are a number of definitions of bullying all definitions include the following characteristics:

- that it tends to be repetitive or prolonged
- that it involves an imbalance of power.
- that it may be verbal, physical or psychological.

4.0 Types of bullying

Child on child abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
Consensual image sharing, especially between older children of the same age, may require a different response. It might not be abusive – but children still need to know it is illegal- whilst nonconsensual is illegal and abusive. UKCIS provides detailed advice about sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and videos.
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).
- Race, religion or culture
- Sexual orientation (or alleged orientation) or of a sexual nature
- Disability or SEN
- Appearance or health
- Home circumstances e.g. bereaved

At Merton Bank Primary School we acknowledge that some pupils may experience bullying at some point. The fact that incidents are not reported does not necessarily mean that bullying is not taking place. Bullying or other forms of harassment can make pupils' lives unhappy, can hinder their academic progress, and can sometimes push otherwise studious children into truancy. In extreme cases it can lead to pupils taking their own lives. (DFE

Circular Pupil Behaviour and Discipline 8/94). Bullying is as much an attitude as an act and it can only be identified by assessing the effects it has on the victim.

The Commission for Racial Equality's working definition of racial abuse is "violence which may be verbal or physical, and which includes attacks on property as well as on the person, suffered by individuals or groups because of their colour, race, nationality or ethnic origins, when the victim believes that the perpetrator was acting on racial grounds and/or there is evidence or racism".

There are times when adults 'bully' children and that such bullying may be viewed as child abuse - if this occurs it will be seen as such and will follow the guidelines laid down in the schools Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Conversely, there are children who bully their parents, teachers and other adults and adults who attempt to bully other adults. The 'pressure to cope' applies to staff as well to children. Staff as well as children benefit if schools and organisations establish an ethos that repudiates bullying.

5.0 Reasons For Tackling Bullying

The Elton Report 'Discipline in Schools' identified Bullying as an issue for all schools and the wider community.

- Victims may spend their lives in fear. They often feel isolated from their peers and may believe that it is something about themselves which has led the bully to pick on them.
- The victim's life may be characterised by unhappiness, a sense of desolation and desperation and exclusion from normal social experiences. These feelings can permeate all aspects of the victim's life and may lead to a strong desire to escape the situation by running away from home, truanting from school, and in some cases, self-harming or even taking of their own life.
- The victims of bullying may have reduced self-esteem and self-worth and their performance in school and other areas often deteriorates.
- Research evidence has shown that victims of bullying may be more likely to experience mental health problems at some stage in their lives.
- Research suggests that children who bully tend to become involved in other forms of difficult behaviour and, like victims of bullying, tend to underachieve at school.
- Research also suggests that children who bully are more likely to get into trouble with the law, suffer from alcohol abuse, have employment problems, suffer marital breakdown, suffer from some form of psychiatric disorder and, are more likely to commit violent crimes in later life.
- Bullying behaviour does not just affect the victim and the perpetrator. Those who witness or know of bullying may live in fear that it will be their turn next.
- Bullying promotes poor models of behaviour and may encourage others to imitate those models.
- Children and young people who have been bullied in one setting may well become bullies in later life.
- For children transferring from primary to secondary schools the fear of bullying is widespread.
- Evidence has shown that bullying is a major concern for parents and children of all ages.
- Organisations, which encourage or even tolerate bullying, are less effective. Where the values and culture of the organisation are dominated by fear and subordination, individuals are less efficient, morale is lower and absenteeism is more frequent.

6.0 Our proactive strategies include:

- We are a 'listening and telling' school. This is a message that will be promoted at all times and with all audiences ensuring vigilance at all times as part of a non-negotiable in our ethos.
- There is an agreed collective responsibility to address any incidents of bullying observed. Bullying is 'everyone's responsibility' in line with safeguarding.
- Pupils (e.g. School Council, Head pupils, Ambassadors) have the opportunity to share pupil voice on bullying, and feedback from pupils is gathered and used to sustain a vigilant culture in which bullying will not be tolerated.
- Peer support system for pupils will be promoted and training provided for both staff and pupils.
- Parents will be encouraged to actively support the policy at parents' evenings by signing the homeschool agreement and promoting the School's Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy and Antibullying Policy.
- Annually the issue of bullying will be raised in order to maintain awareness of the issue through school assemblies and prominent pictorial displays and posters linking to the core school values.
- Every opportunity to promote whole school initiatives such as Anti-Bullying Day, involvement in Anti-Bullying Week (linked to our value of Respect), theatre productions and external speakers will be taken along with our school half-termly values.
- E-Safety curriculum using KAPOW Computing Scheme for Learning is used to teach about e-safety and Internet Safety Day carried out annually promotes the importance of online safety and reporting issues including online bullying. (refer to E-bullying page 1)
- The Governing body and SLT will monitor all forms of bullying and discrimination via termly reports, staff meetings, auditing proformas from pupils and parents and an annual questionnaire on bullying and school practice for pupils to complete.
- Bullying will be addressed within the RSHE and Citizenship Curriculum.
- All staff will have an awareness and responsibility on the identification, prevention and management of bullying. At the start of a new school year, procedures for dealing with a bullying incident will be discussed at an early staff meeting. The policy will be discussed and then distributed to all new staff as part of the induction process.
- Our children also have access to:
Resources e.g. books, social games & activities, PATHs, Pastoral Lead Staff who listen and take action in line with procedures outlined in this policy. Pupils will be involved in creating solutions, in developing policy and practice, and in maintaining agreed strategies and behaviours.

7.0 Meeting the aims of the Policy

To meet the aims of our policy we will:

1. Provide a safe, secure and positive environment in which children and young people can develop and grow making full use of the range of facilities available to them.
2. Thoroughly investigate allegations of bullying, ensuring the voice of the child is listened to and acted upon. This action will demonstrate that a safe, secure and positive environment exists. We assess this impact through a range of formats, questionnaires, class governors and individual conversations.
3. Ensure that victims of bullying will be treated in a supportive manner, and their case heard in an atmosphere of positive concern.
4. To use the staged 7 steps approach wherever relevant to support both sides, appendix 3.

5. Sexting and sexual violence will be reported to the police in line with Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.
6. Incidents of bullying including sexual harassment and physical child on child abuse will result in a risk assessment being carried along with the 7 steps approach.
7. Any concerns found through the 7 steps investigation will result in staff following Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures.

8.0 Procedure staff will follow for alleged bullying incidents

1. First Response Risk Assessment must take place – Listening to the victim and assessing any immediate danger/threats.
2. If victim and alleged perpetrator are together separate at this point to enable further investigation and reduce risks.
3. Decision made as to whether the alleged incident needs referring to police.
4. Complete risk assessment if the alleged incident is related to 'Child on Child Abuse'. (See Risk Assessment Appendix 5)
5. If the incident relates to any other form of bullying 7 steps approach process triggered as detailed below: (Appendix 1, 2 and 3) which will be carried out by the Senior Leadership Team or Class Teachers.
6. Record the incident on CPOMS alerting the Designated and Deputy Safeguarding Leaders.

Online Sexual Harassment - If the allegation involves illegal images of a child, staff must not view or forward illegal images of a child. If possible, reports should be managed with two members of staff present, preferably one being the Designated or Deputy Safeguarding Lead. The police will be informed immediately of any sexual images reported on a child's phone.

7 Steps Approach Procedure

STAGE 1

Step One – interview with the victim – appendix 1

When school finds out that bullying has happened the process starts by an empathic member of staff talking to the victim about their feelings. There is no questioning about the incidents but it is necessary to know who was involved. Parents/carers informed.

Step Two – convene a meeting with the people involved

The designated member of staff arranges to meet with the group of pupils whom the victim identified as being there when they felt unsafe. This will include some bystanders or colluders who joined in but did not initiate any bullying.

Step Three – explain the problem

The group is told about the way the victim is feeling and their poem, piece of writing or drawing is used to emphasise their distress. At no time are details discussed or blame allocated to the group.

Step Four – share responsibility

The staff member does not attribute blame but states that they know that the group are responsible and can do something about it.

Step Five – ask the group for their ideas

Each member of the group is encouraged to suggest a way in which the victim could be helped to feel happier. Their ideas are noted down and some positive responses are given but the group are not made to promise to improve behaviour.

Step Six – let the group resolve the situation

The adult ends the meeting by passing over the responsibility to the group to solve the problem with the adult's support and facilitation. A future meeting is arranged. Parents/Carers of all involved are informed.

Step Seven – meet them again individually – appendix 2

About a week later (depending on age of children) the adult discusses first with the victim and then with each student individually about how things have been going. Step 7 should be repeated at various times throughout the coming months to keep the young people involved in the process.

Should the '**Seven Steps**' approach fail then school would proceed to the next stage as outlined below:

STAGE 2

Keep Parent(s)/Carer(s) informed throughout and especially at step 1, step 6 and step 7.

STAGE 3

Contact outside agencies e.g. Behaviour Intervention Team, Social Care, Educational Psychologist, Police as necessary.

STAGE 4

Pastoral Support Programme - 16 week programme for children who are in danger of exclusion or who have already had a fixed term exclusion.

1. All issues of 'bullying' or perceived bullying will be reported to the Headteacher and documented on CPOMS.

2. Boxes will be provided in all schools and children invited to 'post' any concerns anonymously.
3. Parents of bullies and victims will be asked to contact the Headteacher to discuss all issues. Parents will be asked to inform school of any concerns re: bullying. See staged approach.
4. The Governors will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is actioned and reviewed regularly. The named Governor for Child Protection is Cllr Susan Murphy MBE.

Child on Child Abuse Allegations Procedure:

1. First Response Risk Assessment must take place – Listening to the victim and assessing any immediate danger/threats. Immediately notify Designated or Deputy Safeguarding Leaders.
2. If victim and alleged perpetrator are together separate at this point to enable further investigation and reduce risks. For reports of sexual violence and harassment whilst the school establishes the facts of the case and starts the process of liaising with children's social care and the police, the alleged perpetrator should be removed from any classes they share with the victim.
3. Decision made as to whether the alleged incident needs referring to police.
4. Completion of report form recording child on child abuse incident (See appendix 4). This must be uploaded to CPOMS by the person completing the report and passed immediately to the Designated or Deputy Safeguarding Leader(s).
5. Complete risk assessment if the alleged incident is related to 'Child on Child Abuse'. (See Child on child Abuse Risk Assessment Appendix 5) by Designated or Deputy Safeguarding Leader.

Bullying outside school

The Senior Leadership Team has the power to respond to bullying behaviour involving pupils whilst out of the school grounds; be it on a school organised trip or school organised community activity. Conduct that threatens the health and safety of pupils, staff or members of the community will not be tolerated. The Senior Leadership Team will consider the evidence available and if the claim is proven will impose sanctions in line with the school's Positive Relationships and Behaviour policy. In serious cases where an offence may have been committed, staff may also contact the local police, following procedures outlined in this policy.

This policy will be reviewed as directed by the policy review cycle.

This Policy has been reviewed with due regard to the Equality Act 2010 and Governors are aware of its contents.

This policy has been updated in line with the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (Sept 2023) and 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges' (May 2018) now incorporated in one document.

The policy links to:

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy



Appendix 1 – Report of Incident of Bullying

Child's Name: _____

Date of Record: _____

Name(s) of alleged Bully or Bullies:

Name(s) of other children who may be victims of the Bully/Bullies:

Places where the alleged bullying has taken place:

Nature of the incidents:

Verbal		Physical		Emotional		Cyber	
Name calling		Kicking		Offensive graffiti		Offensive text messages	
Taunting		Hitting		Excluded from group		Offensive emails	
Mocking		Punching		Spreading rumours		Sending degrading images	
Making offensive comments		Pushing		Being forced to do something against own will		Other (please state)	
Teasing		Pinching					

Details:

Action Taken:

Person Making Report: _____

Date of follow up meeting: _____

Parents/Carers informed: _____ Date: _____



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Appendix 2 – Follow-up Report



Child's Name: _____

Date of Record: _____

Name(s) of alleged Bully or Bullies:

Name(s) of other children who may be victims of the Bully/Bullies:

Has action been successful?

Is further monitoring needed?

If so when, what and how?

Person Making Report: _____

Parents/Carers informed _____ Date: _____



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Appendix 3-The Staged 7 Steps Approach to Bullying

STEP	Date, Name/s	Comments
Step 1 Interview the victim Inform parents/carers		
Step 2 Meet with others involved		
Step 3 Explain the problem		
Step 4 Share responsibility		
Step 5 Ask the group for ideas		
Step 6 Let the group resolve the situation Parents/ carers informed		
Step 7 Meet individually again/ repeat as necessary Parents/carers informed		
Stage 2 Keep parents/carers informed throughout		
Stage 3 Contact outside agencies		
Stage 4 Pastoral support programme		



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Appendix 4 Report of Child on Child Abuse Allegation

Person/child making initial allegation: _____

Child's Name(s) Victim(s) of alleged abuse: _____

Date of Record: _____

Name(s) of alleged Perpetrator or Perpetrators:

Name(s) of other children who may be victims of the Perpetrator/Perpetrators:

Places where the alleged incident has taken place:

Nature of the incidents:

Verbal		Physical		Emotional		Cyber	
Name calling		Kicking		Offensive graffiti		Offensive text messages	
Taunting		Hitting		Excluded from group		Offensive emails	
Mocking		Punching		Spreading rumours		Sending degrading images	
Making offensive comments		Pushing		Being forced to do something against own will		Other (please state)	
Teasing		Pinching					

Details

Action Taken:



Appendix 5-Risk Assessment

Victim		
Alleged Perpetrator		
Context of allegation		
Risk Assessment completed by:		
Date:		
Hazards/ Risk Factors	Actions to reduce risks	Date implemented
Risks to other pupils and staff in response to allegation -violence -verbally abusive -distressed and upset -mental health affected - isolation.		
Environment and location in which victim and perpetrator are situated normally in close proximity.		
Further risk of interactions verbal or physical.		
Emotional well-being affected.		