

Anti-Bullying

What is Bullying?

The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can have many forms, and can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or through cyberspace.

<https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/what-bullying>

Understanding a shared definition of bullying is crucial to preventing and tackling it.

Bullying is:

- ❖ Repetitive, wilful or persistent.
- ❖ Intentionally harmful, carried out by an individual or a group.
- ❖ Involves an imbalance of power leaving the victim feeling defenceless.

Rationale

We believe in nurturing, inspiring and encouraging the growth of all the children at Mere Green Primary School, to give them the best possible start in life and optimise their individual capabilities in a safe and secure environment. Bullying of any kind in our school community (this includes staff, children, parents, visitors) is therefore unacceptable and will not be tolerated in our school. We take all incidents of bullying very seriously. Bullying between children is considered child on child abuse.

Aims and Objectives of this Policy

The aim of this policy is to outline a strategy of prevention and resolution to any behaviour deemed as bullying. It is a whole school approach where all of our school community have a collective responsibility to recognise and react to bullying in an appropriate consistent manner in accordance with the school policy.

Implementation of this policy will therefore create an ethos where bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

What does the law say a school has to do?

Every school must have measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying. Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides that maintained schools must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. Please see our behaviour policy on the school website for more details.

The Equality Act 2010 brings together existing duties not to discriminate on grounds of race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and gender re-assignment. It places a requirement on governing bodies and proprietors of schools to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities.

In order to safeguard children and young people, when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' a bullying incident will be addressed as a child protection concern under the Children Act 1989. Where this is the case, the school staff will discuss with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and report their concerns to their local authority Children's Social Care and work with them to take appropriate action.

What does Bullying look like?

Bullying can be in various forms: verbal, physical, social, emotional, cyber. Bullying can include but is not restricted to:

- physical assault
- taking or damaging belongings
- name calling
- taunting
- mocking
- making offensive comments
- cyber bullying - inappropriate text messaging and e-mailing; sending offensive or degrading images; impersonating and hacking into accounts online using internet enabled devices
- producing offensive graffiti
- gossiping and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours
- excluding people from groups.

Although bullying can occur between individuals it can often take place in the presence (virtually or physically) of others who become the 'bystanders' or 'accessories'.

Why are children and young people bullied?

Prejudice Related Bullying

Under the Equalities Act 2010 it is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- age
- being or becoming a transsexual person
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or having a child
- disability
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin including Gypsy ,Roma, Travellers
- religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- sex /gender
- sexual orientation

These are called 'protected characteristics'.

As part of the requirement on schools to promote fundamental British values, schools must proactively challenge derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour including that which is racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disabilist in nature. We will record these types of bullying on the Myconcern database, even that which represents a one-off incident.

Other vulnerable groups include:

- bullying related to appearance or health
- bullying of Young Carers or Looked After Children or otherwise related to home circumstances.

Although the above do not currently receive protection under the Equality Act 2010, bullying for these reasons is just as serious. There is no hierarchy of bullying – all forms should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately.

Prejudice Related Language

Racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disabilist language includes terms of abuse used towards people because of their race/ethnicity/nationality; because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transsexual, or are perceived to be, or have a parent/carer or sibling who is; because they have a learning or physical disability. Such language is generally used to refer to something or someone as inferior. This may also be used to taunt young people who are different in some way to their friends, family members or their parents/carers. In the case of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language particularly, dismissing it as banter is not helpful as even if these terms are not referring to a person's sexual orientation or gender identity, they are using the terms to mean inferior, bad, broken or wrong. We will challenge the use of prejudice related language in our school even if it appears to be being used without any intent. Persistent use of prejudice related language and/or bullying will be dealt with as with any other form of bullying.

Expectations and Responsibilities of Staff and Pupils

All staff have a valuable role to play in the prevention and management of incidents of child-on-child abuse through bullying.

Staff Should:

- ❖ Stop violence and ensure the immediate physical safety of all children concerned
- ❖ Model appropriate positive relationships and communication at all times
- ❖ Be watchful, observe the social relationships between pupils in their care
- ❖ Investigate incidents of reported bullying by listening to the views of all children involved
- ❖ Keep records of child's behaviour and conversations and record on MyConcern database
- ❖ Communicate any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads
- ❖ Encourage children to talk about bullying through the use of PSHE lessons, Assemblies and PSHE class discussion time.
- ❖ Actively teach the children how to keep safe online at all times, through an e-safety unit in the Computing curriculum, E-safety week, workshops for parents and verbal reminders in ICT sessions.

Children themselves have an important role to play in the prevention and reporting of incidents of bullying.

At Mere Green Primary the children are:

- ❖ Encouraged to report all incidents of bullying to a trusted adult. Adults in our school will investigate any bullying reported to them, or will pass on the information to someone in authority.
- ❖ Encouraged to be a friend to others at all times- they have access to a Buddy Bench on the playground if needed as well as a range of outdoor play equipment including table tennis tables, playground markers for games and sports equipment to encourage inclusive play.
- ❖ Encouraged to interact with Peer Mentors from Year 6 who encourage supportive/inclusive friendships and have open dialogues with adults if required.
- ❖ Encouraged to walk away from the perpetrator and tell an adult. Children shouldn't try to retaliate – it only makes matters worse. We acknowledge that this is not easy, as children may be told to 'give as good as they get' outside school, but we discourage this view as two wrongs don't make a right.

- ❖ Invited to tell us their views about a range of school issues through regular pupil voice opportunities.

When bullying is reported, an initial investigation is carried out by the Teacher receiving the information and appropriate action is taken. In every case a written record is made and recorded on MyConcern and the Headteacher and SLT are informed. If another adult in school receives a complaint about bullying, other than a teacher, they must pass this information on to a teacher immediately to enable an investigation to take place.

All Appropriate Staff Will:

- ❖ Talk to the victim to ascertain facts and report findings on MyConcern database.
- ❖ Question the perpetrator or any other children involved. Ensure that the perpetrator understands the effect his/her actions have had on someone else and how to change this behaviour.
- ❖ Decide, through consultation of the behaviour policy, appropriate action/sanctions following the investigation, if it is proven that bullying has taken place. Inform parents, update MyConcern.
- ❖ Arrange nurture sessions with the victim to give them support if required
- ❖ Arrange 1:1 nurture sessions and appropriate support for the perpetrator in order to gain an understanding of the reasons behind their behaviour and how to support them accordingly.
- ❖ Provide education for both the perpetrator and victim (as well as the whole class if appropriate) to better understand bullying behaviour- what it looks like, its possible causes and appropriate resolution to it.
- ❖ Monitor the effectiveness of the action taken.
- ❖ If necessary, alongside the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, consult other agencies, 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.

The Headteacher will:

- ❖ Implement the school anti-bullying strategy and ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy, and know how to identify and deal with incidents of bullying.
- ❖ Report to the Governing Body on the number of instances, anonymous individual cases and the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy on request.
- ❖ Ensure that all children know that bullying is wrong, and that it is deemed unacceptable behaviour in our school. The Headteacher will draw the attention of children to this fact at suitable moments.
- ❖ Set the school climate of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely.
- ❖ Work in collaboration with the PSHE Coordinator to plan a series of events across the year to raise awareness surrounding issues of bullying in its different forms.

Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

Parents and carers who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's Class Teacher immediately. If they are not satisfied with the response, they should contact the Headteacher. If they remain dissatisfied, they should follow the school's complaints procedure. Parents and Carers have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy, actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of the school.

This policy should be considered alongside:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Complaints policy
- E-Safety Policy

Useful Contacts

Children can contact Childline on 0800 11 11.

Parents can contact Family Lives on 0808 800 2222.