

# MEREWORTH COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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| Chair of Governors<br><i>Signature and Date</i> |                                |
| Head Teacher<br><i>Signature and Date</i>       |                                |

# Anti-Bullying Policy for Schools

## 1) Objectives of this Policy

This policy outlines what Mereworth School will do to prevent and tackle bullying. The policy has been drawn up through the involvement of staff and pupils we are committed to developing an anti-bullying culture whereby no bullying, including between adults, or adults and children and young people will be tolerated.

## 2) Our school community:

- discusses, monitors and reviews our anti-bullying policy on a regular basis
- supports all staff to promote positive relationships and identify and tackle bullying appropriately
- ensures that pupils are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that pupils feel safe to learn; and that pupils abide by the anti-bullying policy
- reports back to parents/carers regarding their concerns on bullying and deals promptly with complaints. Parents/ carers in turn work with the school to uphold the anti-bullying policy
- seeks to learn from good anti-bullying practice elsewhere and utilises support from the Local Authority and other relevant organisations when appropriate<sup>1</sup>

## 3) Definition of bullying

Bullying is “**Behaviour by an individual or a group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally**”.

Bullying can include: name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; taking belongings; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.<sup>2</sup> This includes the same inappropriate and harmful behaviours expressed via digital devices (cyberbullying) such as the sending of inappropriate messages by phone, text, Instant Messenger, through web-sites and social networking sites, and sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet.

In other words, ‘**lots of times, on purpose**’.

Bullying can be short term or continuous over long periods of time.

**Bullying may fall into one or more of the following categories:**

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| <b>Emotional</b>                                    | Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)  |
| <b>Physical</b>                                     | Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence   |
| <b>Racial</b>                                       | Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures  |
| <b>Sexual</b>                                       | Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments   |
| <b>Homophobic, Biphobic &amp; Transphobic (HBT)</b> | Because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality or gender identity / assignment   |
| <b>Direct or indirect Verbal</b>                    | Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing  |
| <b>Cyber bullying</b>                               | All areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse<br>Mobile threats by text messaging & calls<br>Misuse of associated technology , i.e. camera & video facilities |

#### **4) Forms of bullying covered by this Policy**

Bullying can happen to anyone. This policy covers all types of bullying including:

- Bullying related to race, religion or culture
- Bullying related to LDD (learning difficulties or disability)
- Bullying related to appearance or health conditions
- Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic bullying)
- Bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying

Bullying can take place in the classroom, playground, toilets, on the journey to and from school, on residential trips and cyberspace.

#### **5) Bullies and Victims**

Bullying takes place where there is an imbalance of power of bully over victim. This can be achieved by:

- The size of the individual,
- The strength of the individual
- The numbers or group size involved
- Anonymity – through the use of cyber bullying or using email, social networking sites, texts etc.

Staff must remain vigilant about bullying and approach this in the same way as any other category of Child Abuse; that is, do not wait to be told before you raise concerns or deal directly with the matter. Children may not be aware that they are being bullied; they may be too young or have Special Educational Needs.

Staff should be able to identify children who may be vulnerable and who could fall victim to bullying as well as those who may demonstrate bullying behaviour.

## **6) 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 bully)
- Has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Comes home starving (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 and jumpy when a cyber message is received
- Lack of eye contact
- Becoming short tempered
- Change in attitude to people at home.

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

## **7) Preventing, identifying and responding to bullying**

The school community will use the **5 Step Approach** – 1.Be available, 2.Investigate, 3.Record, 4.Respond, 5.Follow-up

This will involve the following:

### **Reporting of an incident**

When a bullying incident is reported, the information will be passed on to the following people:-

- The teacher of any child involved
- Head Teacher /Deputy Head Teacher

### **Investigation of an incident**

This will normally be carried out by either the Head Teacher /Deputy Head Teacher, in co-operation with any class teachers or Teaching Assistants concerned. Pupils involved will be interviewed and a record made of their responses using the school's incident report form. A summary will be recorded in the Bullying Incident Folder/Book. Parents of all pupils involved will be informed of the school's action up to this point and will be kept informed of subsequent action.

### **Agreeing a plan for resolution**

Working with the pupils concerned, the Head Teacher /Deputy Head Teacher will devise a plan for resolution of the conflict. This plan will include targets for acceptable behaviour and will set out support measures, which will be provided for the pupils concerned. Any disciplinary action required would use the system of sanctions, which is set out in the school's behaviour policy.

### **Reviewing the situation**

The situation will be monitored and formally reviewed within one month of the initial report. This will be done by the Head Teacher /Deputy Head Teacher in co-operation with the other teachers, pupils and parents concerned.

### **Involvement of other agencies in provision of support**

When necessary, the school will draw on support from a range of outside agencies including the schools Attendance Officer (SEAAS) and Local Authority services and the school's Play Therapist/Counsellor. In most instances, the school will seek to deal with the situation from within its own resources. However, if it becomes clear at step 3 or 4 that outside help is needed, the school will not hesitate to seek further support.

### **The school community will also:**

- actively provide systematic opportunities to develop pupils' social and emotional skills, including their resilience

- consider all opportunities for addressing bullying including through the curriculum PSHE lessons (including e-safety lessons), circle time, assemblies (whole school and Key Stage), focus weeks (Anti-Bullying), through displays
- train all staff including lunchtime staff, Teaching Assistants and Support staff to identify bullying and follow school policy and procedures on bullying, including recording incidents of bullying
- actively create “safe spaces” in the playground and inside the school, and provide ‘Play Buddies’ or support from staff to facilitate quality play for our vulnerable children
- use a variety of techniques to resolve the issues between those who bully and those who have been bullied

## **8) Involvement of pupils**

We will:

- regularly canvas children and young people’s views on the extent and nature of bullying
- ensure pupils know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying
- ensure all pupils are aware of the range of sanctions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying
- involve pupils in anti-bullying campaigns in schools
- publicise the details of help-lines and websites
- teach core values through our schools ‘Values Based Education’ to all pupils
- teach children to respect and value differences
- teach children about acceptable / unacceptable prejudice-related language, attitudes and behaviours regarding gender, race, disability, religion or faith, sexual orientation and gender identity

Activities children are involved in, in the prevention of bullying may include:

- writing a set of school or class rules
- signing a behaviour contract
- writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly
- making up role-plays about what to do through scenarios of bullying
- having discussions about bullying and why it matters that bullies are dealt with quickly
- learning about and celebrating different cultures, beliefs, disabilities and lifestyles
- listening to, respecting and valuing opinions that may differ from their own

## **9) Liaison with parents and carers**

We will:

- ensure that all parents / carers know who to contact if they are worried about bullying; first point of contact should always be the Class Teacher
- ensure all parents know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively; this is available on the school website
- ensure all parents / carers know where to access independent advice about bullying; KCC website “Education and Children”
- work with all parents and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying

### **Advice to Parents**

As the parent of a child whom you suspect is being bullied:

- Report bullying incidents to the class teacher
- In cases of suspected bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff and the Head Teacher notified
- Parents should be informed if there is evidence or concern and will be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem
- If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
- An attempt will be made to help the bully/bullies change their behaviour

Do Not:

- Attempt to sort the problem out yourself by speaking to the child whom you think may be the bully or by speaking to their parents
- Encourage your child to be ‘a bully’ back
- Both of these will only make the problem much harder to solve

### **10) Links with other school policies and practices**

This Policy links with a number of other school policies, practices and action plans including:

- Behaviour & Exclusions Policy
- PSHE Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Equality Policy

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from *Bullying – A Charter for Action*, DCSF

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from *Safe to Learn, Embedding anti-bullying work in schools*, DCSF, 2007 *CFE, Kent County Council – May 2010* 2