

# Mersey Park Primary School

## Anti-bullying Policy



This policy has been developed and implemented in consultation with the whole school community including pupils, parents/carers, staff and governors.

Review date: November 2021



**Rights Respecting School: Article 28**  
**Every child has the right to an education and discipline in schools must respect children's dignity**

# Policy on Anti-Bullying

## Principles and Values

Mersey Park Primary School takes bullying seriously. Pupils and parents/carers should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported and that bullying will not be tolerated. The school will seek ways to counter the effects of bullying that may occur within school or the local community, and will provide activities within the curriculum to minimise the likelihood of bullying taking place. The ethos of our school fosters high expectations of behaviour and we will challenge any behaviour that falls below this.

All pupils have the right to feel secure, to be able to trust without fear, and to expect protection from adults in positions of care and responsibility. They also have a basic right to take full part in their education in an environment that is supportive and positive.

## What is Bullying?

The pupils of the school have agreed the following definitions through work completed in assemblies, Circle Time and lessons:

Year 5 and 6: Bullying is behaviour which **deliberately** makes another person feel uncomfortable, distressed or threatened. Bullying has different forms (physical, emotional, verbal and cyber) and all forms are treated seriously. Bullying is **repeated over time**, however if a single incident is distressing, this should be reported so that it can be dealt with.

Year 3 and 4: Bullying is someone being nasty to you **lots of times**. They might kick or hit you or call you names. A bully might also send you nasty messages. Bullying is when someone **tries** to hurt your feelings or make you feel scared.

Year 1 and 2: Bullying is nasty behaviour that is done to someone by the same person **over and over again**. They might **try** to hurt you or make you feel sad.

Staff, parents/carers and governors of the school have agreed the following definition:

Bullying is behaviour which deliberately makes another person feel uncomfortable, distressed or threatened. Bullying is usually repeated over time, although single incidents are sometimes sufficiently distressing to meet the bullying criteria. Bullying makes those who are being bullied feel powerless to defend themselves. Bullying takes place where there is an imbalance of power of bully (bullies) over victim.

It is not bullying when two children of similar age, power or strength have an occasional fight or quarrel.

Bullying is defined as any actions that are meant to be hurtful and can take many forms. The four main types are:

- Physical (e.g. pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence towards a person or their property)
- Verbal – direct or indirect (e.g. name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing with reference to somebody being different. Involves speaking to a person or about a person. Also includes phone calls)
- Emotional (e.g. staring, glaring, exclusion from activities or friends, tormenting, threatening, made up stories, spreading rumours)
- Cyber (e.g. using technology to hurt someone through a variety of media such as text messages, the internet, social networks, video hosting sites etc. Misuse of associated technology such as camera and video facilities including those on mobile phones)

**Racist bullying** is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or another person. It may be perpetrated against individuals on the basis of their race, skin colour, nationality, culture, language or religion.

**Extremist bullying** is any bullying that would impose extreme views onto others. See the school's Prevent Policy for further information.

**Homophobic, Transphobic and Biphobic bullying** involves the targeting of individuals on the basis of their perceived or actual sexuality or sexual orientation, including if they do not conform to a perceived dominant masculine or feminine gender image.

Some pupils are in some way more vulnerable to bullying, such as pupils who have **specific abilities, disabilities or special educational needs** (including behaviour), **pupils new to the school, pupils who fall into specific social groups due to their family status or those with English as an Additional Language**. School is highly aware of these pupils and takes additional care to meet their needs.

## **Aims and objectives**

Bullying is wrong and damages individual children. We therefore do all we can to prevent it, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable. We understand the importance of having positive attitudes, behaviour and relationships and the impact that this has on learning and achievement. We emphasise that every pupil is of equal worth, irrespective of age, gender, gender identity, family background, ethnic background or academic attainment.

We aim, as a school, to produce a safe, happy and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety, and measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of bullying. The adults working in our school provide positive role models.

This policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur. All incidents are treated seriously and are dealt with quickly and efficiently, following the Pathways of Help (appendix 1).

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 school.

## **Signs and Symptoms**

Signs of bullying can be extremely variable and will very much depend on the individual. It is important, however, that parents/carers and school staff are aware of the signs and symptoms associated with bullying so that they can identify possible problems. The more common signs include:

- Physical signs (injuries, damaged clothing, general ill-health due to stress)
- Emotional signs (mood swings, changes in personality, constant anxiety/nervousness, depression or tearfulness for no apparent reason, lack of confidence, negative self-image, hostility and defensiveness)
- Behavioural signs (withdrawn, frequent unexplained absences, poor concentration, eating disorder, evidence of self-harm, disruptive/challenging/bullying behaviour)
- General (frequently 'lose' money/possessions, appears tired/lethargic, avoids entering/leaving school with others, desire to remain in the company of adults)

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

## **The role of governors**

The governing body supports the head teacher in all attempts to eliminate bullying from our school. The governing body will not condone any bullying at all in our school, and any incidents of bullying that do occur will be taken very seriously, and dealt with appropriately.

The governing body monitors incidents of bullying that do occur, and reviews the effectiveness of this policy regularly. The governors require the head teacher to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying, and to report to the governors about the effectiveness of school anti-bullying strategies.

A parent who is dissatisfied with the way the school has dealt with a bullying incident can ask the chair of governors to look into the matter. The governing body responds within ten days to any request from a parent to investigate incidents of bullying. In all cases, the governing body notifies the head teacher, and asks her to conduct an investigation into the case, and to report back to a representative of the governing body.

The named governor supports the school in implementing the Anti-bullying Policy, through the action plan. They will provide an annual report for the Governing Body to outline the school's anti-bullying work. The Anti-Bullying Policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body.

## **The role of the head teacher**

It is the responsibility of the head teacher to implement the Anti-bullying Policy, and to 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. The head teacher ensures that reports are made to the governing body about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

The head teacher ensures that all children know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in this school.

The head teacher ensures that **all** staff receive sufficient training to be equipped to identify and deal with all incidents of bullying.

The head teacher sets the school climate of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely. When children feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.

Each term the head teacher will assess any incidents of bullying with the SLT updating all bullying records, to ensure that no further bullying involving the pupils in the record has taken place and that any patterns that can be identified in bullying behaviour are being addressed. This will include interviews with the pupils involved. (Appendix 2: Bullying Incident: Follow-up Record)

## **The role of staff members**

All staff will receive training on the implementation of the Anti-Bullying policy annually, and the Pathways for Help is included as an appendix in the Staff Handbook for reference. The policy is available in full in the Policy folder in the staff area on the curriculum drive and on the school's website. Staff induction materials include the Anti-Bullying Policy and Pathways of Help.

The staff in school take all forms of bullying seriously, and seek to prevent it from taking place. The school's values, 'Be nice, Work hard, Never give up', are continually referred to, in assemblies, the delivery of the Jigsaw PSHE curriculum, P4C enquiries, lessons and when dealing with any inappropriate behaviour in school, and are also displayed throughout the school. Through the Jigsaw PSHE curriculum and the Anti-bullying weeks each term, all staff will educate pupils about how to make and maintain friendships, how to mend damaged friendships, what bullying is and is not and how to deal with any incidents of bullying that pupils are involved in or witness to. Through the school's work on promoting British Values, Diversity, Rights Respecting Schools and School of Sanctuary, pupils are encouraged to understand and empathise with vulnerable peers and to gain the skills to support all their peers appropriately. Staff, through their professional

responsibilities, model positive behaviour and actively encourage children to have respect for each other and for other people's property. Pupils' polite and kind behaviour is regularly acknowledged and rewarded each week in the Awards Assembly.

Should incidents of bullying arise teachers and support staff keep a record (in the Floor Incident File/Lunchtime Books), and follow the Pathways of Help to deal with these incidents. A copy of the record is passed to the classteacher/Floor Leader and the headteacher. Teachers and support staff do all they can to support the child who is being bullied and the child who is bullying, ensuring that parents/carers remain informed. Incidents of bullying are followed up repeatedly at the weekly SLT meeting, so senior staff can check that the bullying has not resumed over the following months.

When any bullying has taken place, the teacher will deal with the issue as soon as possible. This will involve support for the victim and may involve sanctions for the offender and ongoing support will be provided over a sustained period as appropriate, to ensure that no further incidents of bullying occur. Time is spent talking to the child who has done the bullying, explaining to them why their action was wrong and how they should change their behaviour in future, and reassuring the victim that measures will be put into place to ensure that no further incidents of bullying will take place. Restorative approaches will be used if appropriate. Both children's parents/carers will be informed, and they may be invited into the school to discuss the situation. In more extreme cases, e.g. where these initial discussions have proved ineffective, the head teacher may contact external support agencies, such as the school's Educational Psychologist. A satisfaction survey will be completed by the bullied pupil, parent/carer and staff involved for each bullying incident, in order for procedures to be checked and improved if necessary. (Appendix 2: Bullying Incident: Follow-up Record)

Any relevant opportunities to attend training will be taken up by all members of staff, to equip them to identify bullying and to follow school policy and procedures with regard to behaviour management. Evaluation of training and next steps will be recorded and passed to the school's Continuing Professional Development co-ordinator.

The school's Pastoral Care Team includes the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Assistant Safeguarding Lead, SENCo, Home/School Liaison Officer and ELSA Lead. This team works to ensure that all pupils, with particular regard to pupils who may be vulnerable to bullying, are provided with an appropriate level of support to ensure that they are able to experience all that school has to offer. The team, with the support of the headteacher, identifies pupils to complete a range of interventions that are offered each term. The group programmes include 'Peacemakers' and 'Happy to be me'. Pupils are also provided with individual support through 'Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine' and 1:1 sessions such as Drawing and Talking Therapy.

Teachers use a range of methods to help prevent bullying and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. Through the PSHE curriculum children are taught about how to develop positive relationships, and this message is reinforced in all aspects of school life. Further work covers the different types of bullying. Staff use drama (including drama groups), role-play and stories within the curriculum and assemblies, to help pupils understand the feelings of bullied children and those who bully, and to practise the restraint required to avoid bullying behaviour. Philosophy for Children enquiries are used to praise, reward and celebrate the success of all children, which helps to create a positive atmosphere. Through the Jigsaw PSHE curriculum, bullying is raised as a whole school issue each year and two further anti-bullying weeks are scheduled annually into the school's calendar, with one week dealing specifically with cyber bullying, which is followed up through the Computing curriculum. Each class will produce their own Anti-Bullying Charter which every pupil signs before it is displayed in the classroom. Further opportunities to raise bullying as an issue are identified through the cross curricular work of each year group.

Our induction day each year includes opportunities to celebrate diversity, develop acceptance of different cultures and faiths and the different family units that exist in our community, in order to support all children, for example those who have LGBT+ family members.

Each floor has a 'Bother Box' which pupils can use to raise any concerns about bullying, a 'Happy Box' where pupils can record when another pupil has provided them support and a 'Sorry Box' where pupils can send a message of apology to another member of the school community. These are checked by staff on a daily basis. The school's anti-bullying email is also checked daily for messages. Pupils complete an annual anti-bullying questionnaire to identify areas for further development. Every pupil has chosen a member of staff as their 'buddy', from whom they can seek advice and support on a wide variety of issues, including bullying.

Staff provide training and support for the Year 6 Play Leaders, in order to help them provide engaging activities for younger pupils during lunchtime and to ensure that all pupils feel included.

Staff representatives will attend the Anti-Bullying Steering Group meeting, each half term, to provide input into how to move the school forward in its response to any incidents of bullying and the school's work to eradicate bullying.

Staff must remain vigilant about bullying. They should not wait for a child to tell them that they are being bullied before raising concerns or dealing 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 are made aware of any vulnerable pupils within their class during a transfer of records meeting, so the well-being of these pupils can be monitored more closely and additional support can be offered if required.

### **The role of parents/carers**

Parents/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 who will follow the school's 'Pathways of Help'. If they are not satisfied with the response, they should contact the head teacher. If they remain dissatisfied, they should follow the school's complaints procedure, which is available from the school office.

Parents/carers have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy, actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of the school. An anti-bullying advice leaflet, produced by the Anti-Bullying Steering Group, is issued annually to parents/carers and information for parents is available on the school's website, including advice for dealing with incidents of cyberbullying. (Appendix 3: Anti-Bullying Leaflet for Parents/Carers)

Parent/carer representatives will attend the Anti-Bullying Steering Group meeting, each half term, to provide input into how to move the school forward in its response to any incidents of bullying and its education of pupils to ensure that bullying incidents do not take place.

Parents are discouraged from trying to deal with any incidents of bullying themselves, by approaching either the child involved or their parents.

### **The role of pupils**

Pupils are encouraged to tell anybody they trust if they are or someone else is being bullied, and if the bullying continues, they must keep on letting people know. All pupils have been informed of the lead teacher and governor for anti-bullying issues, through Floor Assemblies, and information posters around the school highlight who pupils can approach for support with a bullying issue, both in school and through the use outside agencies. A copy of the Anti-Bullying Leaflet for Pupils, designed by the Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, is updated and issued to pupils each year. This presents the key points of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy in a child friendly format. (Appendix 4: Anti-Bullying Leaflet for Children) There is also a 'Pathways of Help' for pupils which is displayed around school. (Appendix 5: Pathways of Help for Pupils)

Each floor has a 'Bother Box' where pupils can post a note to alert the Floor Leader that they are being bullied, if they find this easier than approaching a member of staff. All pupils are offered the opportunity to select a staff buddy, who will make themselves available if they have any concerns or worries. There is also an anti-bullying email address highlighted on the school's website and in the monthly newsletter, which pupils can use to report any incidents of bullying, which they have the opportunity to practice using during ICT sessions.

Pupils new to the school are provided with a small group of pupil 'buddies' who are able to make them feel safe and welcomed. Buddies are also allocated to vulnerable children or children who may have experienced bullying, to ensure that they have additional support.

Year 6 pupils are trained as Play Leaders to work with the younger pupils during lunchtime, leading activities and ensuring that all pupils are included. Their training includes identifying pupils who may be bullying or being bullied and the steps they should take to alert a member of staff.

The Anti-bullying Ambassadors from each class in Years 4 – 6 are responsible for passing on information about bullying to their own class and younger pupils in a 'buddy' class. They have received training which will be updated annually. The Anti-Bullying Ambassadors report any incidents of bullying that they may observe or hear about in school and incidents involving pupils in the local community. The Anti-Bullying Ambassadors will attend the Anti-Bullying Steering Group meeting, each half term, to provide input into how to move the school forward in its response to any incidents of bullying.

Pupils are invited to tell us their views about a range of school issues, including bullying, in the annual pupil questionnaire.

### **Monitoring and review**

This policy is monitored on a day-to-day basis by the head teacher, who reports to governors on the effectiveness of the policy.

The anti-bullying policy is the governors' responsibility, and they review its effectiveness annually with input from pupils, parents/carers, governors and staff. Views and opinions will be gathered on the content and impact of the policy through the Anti-Bullying Steering Group.

### **Other relevant policies/procedures:**

Behaviour Management

Health and Safety

PSHE

Safeguarding

Prevent

Acceptable Users

e-Safety

Mobile phone use

Email use

Appendix 1: Pathways of Help

Appendix 2: Bullying Incident: Follow-up Record

Appendix 3: Anti-Bullying Leaflet for Parents/Carers

Appendix 4: Anti-Bullying Leaflet for Children

Appendix 5: Pathways of Help for Pupils