

Meare Village Primary School

Four walls that hold tomorrow....

Anti-Bullying Policy



Approved by: J. Fellows Date: sep. 2021.
Last reviewed on: Sept 2021
Next review due by: sept 2023.

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 Meare Village Primary school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell someone and be confident that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

We encourage children's sense of responsibility towards each other, and emphasise that if *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening, they are expected to tell the staff.

We believe that everybody has the right to be treated with respect. We have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying, and to help children who are bullying to learn different ways of behaving. Bullying will not be tolerated.

Definitions

Bullying is the use of aggression or verbal abuse or intimidation with the intention of hurting another person. It may be repeated low-level incidents; in school we talk about repeated events being bullying rather than - or one-off extreme incidents involving one or more aggressor. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Types of Bullying

Bullying can be related to:

- Race, religion or culture. This may include bullying of travellers or cultural bullying of particular groups.
- Special educational needs and disabilities.
- Appearance. This may include physical characteristics such as size and weight; body image issues; obvious signs of affluence, or lack of it.
- Health conditions or disability. This may include visible signs of a condition, eg eczema or use of equipment to aid disabled pupils.
- Sexual orientation.
- Gender. This may include sexist bullying or sexual bullying.
- Home circumstances. Young carers or looked-after children, or children affected by domestic violence, criminal activity, bereavement, being part of a refugee family, or siblings being bullied by association.

Methods of Bullying

Bullying can be:

- **Emotional:** being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (eg hiding books, threatening gestures)
- **Physical:** pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any other use of violence
- **Racist:** racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- **Sexual:** unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- **Homophobic:** because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality. This may include taunting about family circumstances (for example children of same-sex couples) or use of the word gay as an insult.
- **Verbal:** name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- **Cyber:** all areas of internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse; mis-use of mobile phones to threaten or intimidate by text messaging and calls; misuse of associated technology, eg posting images or videos on the internet, or spreading by mobile phone.

Objectives of this Policy

- To ensure that all children, parents, staff and governors have an understanding of what bullying is.
- To ensure that bullying is taken seriously by all members of the school community. Children and parents should be assured that bullying will be dealt with effectively when bullying is reported.
- To ensure that all children, parents and staff follow the school's procedures if

bullying occurs.

Prevention

We work hard to prevent children bullying others. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- Anti-Bullying Weeks
- PSHE teaching
- Circle Time & School Council
- Assemblies
- Some Classes may have Worry Boxes, for positive affirmations as well as negative comments. These are checked regularly.
- We ensure that children can identify an adult they are able to talk to with concerns.
- E-safety training
- We track low-level incidents which, when they recur, may lead to a pattern of bullying. A form is kept in the staff room to record incidents and may be also in the detention book.
- We track low-level playground incidents through reporting of incidents to staff by Lunch Time Supervisors.
- We also work with parents to help prevent issues, for example bringing to their attention the possible implications of the use of social-networking sites and use of mobile phones, letters and the newsletter.

Procedures

1. Report bullying incidents to staff. The class teacher and SLT must be informed.
2. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
3. Bullying incidents will be recorded through the detention book and incident form.
4. The child/children bullying are asked to make a genuine apology.
5. The school behaviour policy is followed to impose sanctions. In serious cases, internal or external exclusions will be considered.
6. All staff will be informed of any bullying incidents and will be extra vigilant at all times of the extended day. We use our briefing meetings and the communications board in the staffroom for this purpose. Our monitoring procedures check to see if there are any repeated events.
7. Parents of all children concerned are informed.
8. If necessary and appropriate, police/community support officers will be consulted.
9. The school supports both the victim and the children who have bullied. If possible, the pupils are reconciled. Staff help children who have bullied to change their behaviour. This may involve Circle Time discussions, support in facilitating friendships and games on the playground, use of role play and drama, and the involvement of the Primary Outreach Support (Behaviour) team, working with groups or the whole class.

In determining whether an incident constitutes harassment or bullying, the context in which the incident occurs will need to be considered as well as the victim's understanding of the perpetrator's motives. Particularly vulnerable groups – refugees, newly arrived pupils, 'looked after' children are frequently the target of bullying behaviours

The school will:

- Take all bullying problems seriously both of pupils and adults
- Investigate all incidents thoroughly
- Keep a written record of the incident, investigation and outcomes (appendix)
- Ensure that bullies and victims are interviewed separately
- Obtain witness information
- Inform staff about the incident where a pupil is involved
- Inform appropriate staff where a member of staff is involved
- Ensure that action is taken to prevent further incidents

Such action may include:

- imposition of sanctions
- obtaining an apology
- informing parents of both bully and bullied
- provide appropriate training
- provide mentor support for both victim and bully

Identifying the problem:

Pupils

- Children who are being bullied at school will not always be prepared to tell those in authority. Signs of bullying may include:
- unwillingness to come to school
- withdrawn isolated behaviour
- complaining about missing possessions
- refusal to talk about the problem
- being easily distressed
- damaged or incomplete work

Staff will be able to use their knowledge of the pupils to identify changes in their behaviour that might indicate bullying. Pupils should be encouraged to be open with their parents who can pass on concerns to the school.

Pupils have these responsibilities:

- to not become involved in bullying incidents
- to be aware of the school's way of dealing with incidents and of the kinds of support available
- to always tell a member of staff if they think bullying is happening as soon as possible
- to always talk to parents/carers about any worries
- to support pupils who may be subjected to bullying
- to be prepared to speak up if they see or hear something they think is unfair

Victims of bullying may end up believing that they deserve to be bullied. They feel powerless and vulnerable. Self-esteem can be badly damaged and self-confidence needs to be re-established.

It is the Headteacher who has the pivotal role in ensuring that the school fulfils its legal obligations and that anti-bullying and anti harassment procedures are developed and followed within the school.

Responsibilities of the Headteacher are to:

- ensure the school has a policy covering; equal opportunities and anti-bullying encompassing harassment
- ensure that the policies are known to all staff and Governors
- ensure procedures are carried out consistently and fairly by all staff
- ensure monitoring systems are in place
- report to Governors once every other term about the situation with regard to bullying and harassment
- ensure all school staff have opportunity to receive training on appropriate methods of dealing with incidents of bullying and harassment
- establish systems which are perceived as supportive by pupils who are involved in incidents
- ensure that the ethos within school allows pupils to feel that it is 'safe' to tell and where they have the confidence to believe that school will deal effectively with incidents brought to their attention

The role of the teacher:

The role of the teacher is crucial in implementing the school's anti-bullying policy. The classroom ethos, which they establish, will ensure that equality of opportunity and anti discrimination works in practice.

Teachers have the responsibility to:

- ensure that they know the content of the equal opportunities and anti-bullying policy
- ensure that training opportunities are taken up
- be sensitive to the possibility of bullying and harassment in a consistent manner, including the logging and reporting procedures used in school
- ensure that the beliefs and values underpinning equal opportunities and anti-bullying are reflected within the classroom environment and the curriculum

- be aware of the cultural and social diversity and the beliefs of students in the class in order to be aware of the comments and or behaviour, which could be offensive to particular individuals or specific groups of people
- manage behaviour in a way that is seen by the pupils as fair and which models respect for the individual

Strategies:

- involve students in drawing up ground rules for class behaviour
- display agreed codes of conduct in relation to the 'good to be green' programme prominently within the class
- have regular opportunities for whole class and/or group discussion where the topic of bullying and harassment is raised and all pupils are encouraged and supported to give their views and express their feelings. It is important to create a climate where it is safe and acceptable to 'tell'. Circle time is one established way where this may be accomplished
- consider at the planning stage of any topic how equal opportunity issues can be promoted. Become aware of which resources available within school can support this. Where appropriate deal with instances of bullying and harassment explicitly through the curriculum.
- Use display materials within the classroom and around school that help to promote positive values
- Use discussion and curriculum opportunities to discuss the role of the 'bystander' in supporting bullying and harassment.
- Intervene when incidents are observed outside the classroom so that pupils do not feel unprotected during particular parts of the day

The role of Support Staff:

Support staff include learning support assistants, clerical staff, midday meal supervisors and the caretaker.

Support staff have the responsibility to:

- Ensure familiarity with the school's equal opportunities and anti-bullying policies
- Attend training on dealing with instances of bullying and harassment
- To be sensitive to all instances of bullying and harassment within the class and around school; to deal with every incident in a fair and consistent manner according to the school's policy
- Find out about the diversity of pupils represented within the school and wider community to be alert to comments or behaviour which could be offensive to specific groups of people

- Report incidents of bullying and harassment

Strategies:

- Participate in training to become familiar with the school's equal opportunities and anti-bullying policies
- Ensure familiarity with the school's systems for managing behaviour and then follow them consistently
- Intervene in any incident observed around the school
- Remain calm and avoid getting into confrontations with pupils
- Model ways of talking and behaving which exemplify respect for the individual
- Challenge stereotypic remarks e.g. sexist comments; racist assumptions
- Keep a watch for 'loners' who may be vulnerable to bullying and try to involve them in games with other pupils
- Chat informally to pupils about their interests and their news. Being proactive about building up positive relationships with potentially difficult pupils can be helpful when later trying to modify their behaviour

Parents

Parents and carers have a very important role in supporting the school to implement its anti-bullying policy effectively.

Parents have the responsibility to:

- Ask for information on the school's anti-bullying and behaviour policy and any approach used to respond to incidents of bullying or harassment
- Work in partnership with the school on encouraging positive behaviour, valuing and respecting difference
- Understand that children need to learn to deal with disagreements and conflict in an assertive but non violent manner
- Be alert to and inform school about significant behaviour changes and signs of distress in their children
- Inform staff of any significant change in circumstances which may affect the way in which pupils respond in school
- Alert staff to information reported by pupils on incidents or any concerns arising about other pupils' behaviour and attitude

- Communicate to children that they (parents) trust the school and staff to deal appropriately with incidents that arise and which the school are aware of

Strategies:

- Parents need to be aware of opportunities offered for formal and informal consultation with parents
- Discuss school incidents at home and encourage children to share feelings and anxieties. Promote the development of important interpersonal skills such as listening to others, negotiation and communication
- Provide opportunities to discuss issues relevant to friendships and relationships both in and out of school
- Tell the class teacher of any concerns about bullying or harassment. Ask the teacher to be informed of any action taken
- Be aware that many incidents will occur which are disagreements between pupils and where there is no clear bully or victim. Both parties will have to accept the consequences of their behaviour in line with the school behaviour policy

Role of Governors

Governors have an important role in ensuring that the school fulfils its legal obligations with respect to anti-bullying, anti harassment and anti racist procedures. The governors have a responsibility to ensure that procedures undertaken in school are monitored and effective.

Governors have the responsibility to:

- Ensure that the school's equal opportunities and behaviour policy make reference to the different forms of bullying and harassment
- Ensure that the curriculum provides planned opportunities for pupils to discuss issues relevant to anti-bullying and equality of opportunities generally
- Ensure that staff receive appropriate relevant training to enable policies to be effectively implemented
- Ensure that they are aware of any patterns of bullying and persistent parental complaints
- Ensure that incidents are monitored and if appropriate policies and procedures are reviewed
- Ensure that parents are informed of the school's anti-bullying policy and where appropriate are consulted within any review process
- Support the Headteacher in implementing school policy

Strategies:

- Become familiar with and clear about the school's current position on anti-bullying, anti-harassment and equal opportunities
- Attend training opportunities for Governors on these issues
- Clarify the pupil's position in implementing the policy
- Where necessary to help establish an action plan to review policy and procedures
- Support the Headteacher in establishing appropriate mechanisms for monitoring incidents
- Help the Headteacher identify ways of disseminating the policy to pupils and to parents
- Establish a clearly communicated mechanism by which parents can communicate concerns with the school and to Governors

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CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CONTRACTORS

- Please sign in and out of the building
- Work safely and responsibly and be aware of responsibility for own actions and behaviour. It is the responsibility of all adults to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.
- Please close gates and doors behind you.
- Avoid contact with children. **Never** give your personal contact details to children or young people.
- Never be in contact with children without school supervision.
- Stay within the agreed work area and access routes, obtain permission if you need to go outside these areas.
- Keep staff informed of where you are and what you are doing.
- Do not use profane or inappropriate language.
- Dress appropriately.
- Remember your actions, no matter how well intentioned, could be misinterpreted. Be mindful of the need to avoid placing yourself in vulnerable situations.

