



Margaret McMillan Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy

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What is bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

We define bullying as;

“The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.”

It can be Physical, Verbal or Psychological. It can happen face to face or in cyberspace. It can be hidden or indirect.

(Anti-bullying Alliance)

Bullying can be:

- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. threatening gestures)
- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic: because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing,
- Online: All areas of the internet, such as e-mail & internet chat rooms misuse
- Mobile: threats by text messaging or calls and misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities.

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. All schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this Policy

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.



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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
- Asks to be driven to school
- Changes their usual routine
- Is unwilling to go to school
- Begins to truant
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts to threaten suicide or runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the mornings
- Begins to do poorly in school work
- Comes home with torn clothes or damaged books
- Has possessions which are damaged or 'go missing'
- Asks for money or starts stealing money
- Has dinner or other monies continually 'lost'
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Comes home starving (money/lunch may have been stolen)
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what is wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or telephone
- Is nervous or jumpy when receiving e-mails etc.

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

Online bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Online bullying can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle online bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

Where school staff feel that an offence may have been committed they will seek assistance from the police.

Bystanders

A bystander is a person who does not become actively involved in a situation where someone else requires help and in this way is understood to be a passive observer, an onlooker who watches something happening, but stays on the sidelines and doesn't intervene or get help, even



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if someone needs it. Though they don't actively participate, they encourage the perpetrators, who will feel driven on by the audience. "Doing nothing" does have a real impact on events and may cause harm.

To tackle bullying we must help bystanders understand their responsibilities to help address bullying and take action where it is needed.

Bullying which occurs outside school premises

School can address pupil's conduct that occurs outside the school premises "to such an extent as is reasonable". This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school visits or public transport, outside the local shops, or in town.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted on and the information from the investigation may need to be shared with the police. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will always be informed. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying the member of staff will only discipline the pupil on school premises or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the staff member (ie when on educational visits).

Dealing with Bullying

When bullying has taken place the emphasis is always on a caring, listening approach. The bullying behaviour and threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.

If bullying is suspected we will fully investigate by talking to the suspected bully, suspected victim and any witnesses. Discussions are held (led by the class teacher / member of senior leadership team) between the offender, victim and any potential witnesses.

It is also important to consider the motivations behind bullying behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case the child engaging in bullying may need support themselves and this support will be negotiated with pupil, parents and external agencies as required.

Restorative approach

This approach is based on four key areas:

RESPECT - for everyone by listening to other opinions and learning to value them
RESPONSIBILITY - taking responsibility for your own actions

REPAIR - developing the skills within our school community so that its individual members have the necessary skills to identify solutions that repair harm and ensure behaviours are not repeated

RE-INTEGRATION - working through a structured, supportive process that aims to solve the problem and allows young people to remain in mainstream school

Procedures

1. Report concerns and/or incidents of bullying to a member of staff who will ensure this is shared with the Senior management team.
2. Incidents of bullying should always be recorded on CPOMS and the appropriate Phase Leader informed.
3. Parents should be informed and notified of the outcome following investigation.
4. We will help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
5. Sanctions are applied according to the School Behaviour Policy. If necessary and appropriate, the police and/or Child Protection team will be consulted.
6. As required, further referrals will be made to external support agencies for further advice and recommendation.



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7. In extreme cases, e.g. where all strategies have proved ineffective, a personal support plan will be put in place.
8. The situation is continually monitored, to ensure that the behaviour does not continue.

Outcomes

1. In-house support will be available, as necessary, for all parties via the class teacher / learning mentor/ appropriate Phase Leader.
2. The bully (bullies) will be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may also take place in line with the school behaviour policy. **This does not mean that the victim of bullying has to accept the apology or meet with the bully.**
3. Whilst every attempt will be made to resolve the issues whilst maintaining attendance, in serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered.
4. Where at all possible the pupils will be reconciled.
5. Discussions are held with the offender, led by the class teacher / appropriate Phase Leader. Time is spent explaining to them why their action was wrong and how they should change their behaviour in future. They will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and the sanctions for their choices.
6. After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place. Careful consideration must be made to prevent 'labelling' of pupils either as victims or bullies.

Prevention

It is the school's policy to work together with pupils and parents to prevent bullying as far as possible. This will include:

- Having zero tolerance in our school.
- Having a clear set of school values.
- Signing a home/school contract
- Being open about bullying and discussing with the children why it matters
- Providing opportunities for children to talk about bullying in a caring and secure atmosphere
- Pro-active interventions by appropriate Phase Leader, wherever vulnerability is suspected in a child.
- Use of the PHSCE curriculum across the school to promote children's emotional skills and develop their empathy towards other members of the community.
- The use of Anti-Bullying Week across school annually to focus all children and stakeholders on their understanding of bullying issues and their role in its prevention.
- The use of Mentors to lead and promote cooperative and constructive activities during all break times.
- After-school clubs and learning provision to promote children's interest in cooperative and constructive activities.
- Accessing additional help and guidance from external agencies.