

Merton Bank



Anti - Bullying Policy

October 2020

To be reviewed Autumn 2021

Definition

"The willful conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten some-one. It can be physical and/or verbal and it can be directed at some-one's physical characteristics, personality, racial origins, gender or social class background."

Tattum and Herbert 1990

At Merton Bank Primary school we recognise that there are many kinds of bullying including those outlined below:-

NAME CALLING nicknames, personal attributes, sexual/racial taunts, homophobic language is explored/challenged immediately.

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE pushing, kicking punching etc

**INTIMIDATION/
EXTORTION** damaging work, taking sweets/money

ISOLATION to purposefully exclude

Research has shown that girls and boys are equally as likely to be involved in bullying. Bullying can either be by groups of children or by individuals.

Although rare in a primary school, any incident motivated by racial, sexual, or other prejudice, typically one involving violence, will be treated as a hate crime and dealt with accordingly. Victimisation or treating someone badly because they have done a 'protected act' (or because you believe that a person is going to do a protected act) will also be treated with the utmost significance as will harassment, aggressive pressure or intimidation.

All staff are familiar with the confidential reporting policy/whistleblowing and will refer to this if an adult on site shows any of the above behaviours.

Aims

At Merton Bank Primary school we do not tolerate bullying of any kind. All pupils and staff must feel safe in an environment, which allows them to work and play together. It is important that the school is viewed as a community of which everybody is an integral part. A member of our school community who may be vulnerable for one reason or another must be closely observed so that early signs of bullying can be detected.

The importance of early intervention is crucial.

From time to time arguments will occur: incidents such as this are not classed as bullying.

Objectives

- To ensure the safety and happiness of our pupils and staff.
- To ensure the right environment for each individual to achieve their potential.
- To provide a model for responsible behaviour.
- To endorse the reputation of the school as effective and caring.
- To safeguard the emotional/ mental health of our pupils so that they might become responsible and caring adults.
- To provide access to the Pastoral Team.

The school's policy includes the following key elements:

- The promotion of positive behaviour
- The development of preventative approaches
- Appropriate disciplinary procedures
- Involvement of parents/carers and outside agencies

Relationships based on mutual respect, trust, care and consideration for others are an important part of our school aims, of our school discipline policy and are embedded in our core values.

It is our aim to create an environment in which children feel safe to approach adults to express their fears and anxieties. Staff are also encouraged to voice concerns to their team leader or line manager.

There is a belief amongst some adults that if bullies are ignored they will stop bullying; that bullying is an inevitable phase of childhood that will pass without their intervention; that all children must learn to stand up for themselves; that adult intervention to protect the victims of bullies would merely inhibit a valuable social lesson. **At Merton Bank Primary school we recognise that this is not the case and we are aware that bullying does occur and needs addressing when it does.**

All members of staff are asked to be on the look-out for signs of bullying and to report them to the Senior Leadership Team should any concerns be identified. All members of staff, including lunch time supervisors, are given advice on how to spot bullying and strategies for dealing with it. Incidents of bullying are logged on the incident log sheets (See Appendix 1) which are then kept in the Head Teacher's office. Where incidents of bullying are of a racial nature, they will be logged through the system outlined in the school's racial inclusion policy. Any incidents of homophobic bullying will be dealt with in a similar manner.

Parents/carers are encouraged to come in and discuss any problems with staff/safeguarding team as soon as they arise. Appointments must be made with the class teacher as these meetings need time putting aside. Any reported incidents of bullying are dealt with as a matter of urgency. Where appropriate, parents/carers will be reported back to.

A member of the Senior Leadership Team deals with any report of bullying immediately. The relevant individuals should be questioned individually and can be brought "face to face with their "victim" if the other child is happy with this arrangement. The purpose of this is to try to impress on the bully, the effect of their actions on the person who is being bullied and to try to make them understand how that person feels (restorative justice). The child/children who are being bullied are given advice on how to deal with the bullies.

Areas within the school, which may be potential danger areas for bullying, have been identified. These are places such as the toilet areas, round corners at the side of the playground. Staff are asked to make sure that these areas are checked regularly particularly during the lunchtime period. This limits any incidences of bullying happening in these areas.

Strategies for dealing with an incident of bullying

At all times it is important that a member of staff uses their judgment to determine whether an incident is of a minor or serious nature and if in fact it is bullying. Children often fall out or play 'jokes' which other children do not find amusing. Staff will do all they can to 'get to the bottom' of an incident. Children are interviewed independently and accounts of incidents are compared by staff to establish 'truthfulness'. Reflection time during lunch and breaks is used to iron out any minor altercations. This early intervention has been found to be beneficial in preventing more serious issues arising.

If the member of staff decides that the incident is serious enough to be classified as bullying then the following steps will be taken:-

Remove the victim from the scene as quickly as possible rather than challenge the bully there and then.

If you are unable to deal with the incident immediately, tell the child that he/she will be spoken with later without specifying how and when. This can be an effective strategy but must however be followed up as soon as possible.

Do not be aggressive with the bully.

Do not physically intervene unless the pupil is causing physical injury to another pupil. When using any form of physical restraint, staff should be mindful of the DFE guidelines on the appropriate use of physical restraint and correct forms must be completed as soon as possible after the restraint. All staff have undergone 'Team Teach' training.

Report the incident to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Do not accept excuses from the child who is bullying. Ask questions such as:-
If the incident was an accident, did the children involved act by getting help?
If it was a joke, was everybody laughing?
If it was a game, was everybody laughing/could anyone join in?

Breaktime Buddies are trained to work with other pupils who are feeling bullied / lonely. Mrs McKenna will provide training and meet with the children regularly to ensure that they are clear of their role. As a result of COVID 19, we are currently unable to train Breaktime Buddies. However, our pupils know they can approach the adults on duty and inform them if they are unhappy or lonely. In addition to this, due to the changes in school routines, playtimes have altered and there is now a reduction in the amount of pupils on the playground at any one time. This, coupled with the fact that year groups play in a designated area means that staff are able to observe whole year groups at a time.

Teaching pupils how to challenge bullying behaviour

Pupils throughout the school can be taught to refuse to comply with bullying pupils' demands. Encouraging a pupil to say to another pupil that they do not like what the other is doing gives the bullied child the opportunity to respond assertively to the situation with the backing of the teacher.

The majority of pupils may not be involved in bullying behaviour themselves but they are likely to know that it is happening. It is possible to motivate peer pressure so that pupils take an active stand against bullying behaviour. Pupils can be encouraged to be active bystanders by:-

- not allowing someone to be deliberately left out of a group
- by not laughing or smiling when someone is being bullied
- telling a member of staff what is happening (This is not telling tales)
- encouraging the bullied pupils to join in with their activities or groups
- telling the bullying pupil to stop what they are doing
- showing the bullying pupil that they disapprove of what he/she is doing

Role play can be a useful technique in helping pupils rehearse more challenging situations. PSHE lessons fully support these strategies.

Sanctions used to deter bullying among students.

Bullying is dealt with through the behaviour sanctions which are found in the school's behaviour policy. Persistent bullying results in the parents/carers of the pupil/pupils being asked into school to discuss their child's behaviour. A continuation of the bullying will result in the child/children being excluded for a fixed period at the Executive's Head teacher's discretion and in extreme cases, permanent exclusion. Restorative justice is used to repair harm (not just for incidents involving bullying).

Monitoring

Incidents of bullying amongst students and how they are resolved are monitored and recorded. The purpose of monitoring is two-fold. Firstly to assist the school to identify patterns. The following things need to be taken account of:-

- who was involved (or alleged to be involved)
- where and when it happened
- what happened
- what action was taken
- how it was followed up

Secondly, monitoring is useful because it helps to establish whether or not the policy is being effective. An indicator of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying policy would be a reduction in the reports of bullying. Information gathered does not identify individual children but includes details of the gender and ages of the pupils and the nature of the bullying.

Curriculum approaches to the topic of bullying

At Merton Bank School, we believe that it is better to address problems before they arise and for this reason the subject of bullying is discussed regularly. Many subject areas within the curriculum can be used to promote anti-bullying values and co-operative behaviour. This may be through a discussion about individual or group behaviour and its impact on others. This may arise from discussion about an incident in history, current affairs or a fictional account.

It is also achieved indirectly through the selection of curriculum approaches that require pupils to work together co-operatively. This can include opportunities for personal evaluation on how each pupil has worked with others and how interaction might be improved will also encourage these attitudes.

Bullying as an issue is dealt with through R.E. and P.S.H.C.E. This may be in the hidden curriculum within a topic or as a unit of work. Bullying is also dealt with in assemblies and discussed through anti-bullying week.

This policy has been compiled with reference to "**Bullying: -- Don't suffer in silence**" D.F.F.E. 1994 HMSO publications.

This policy has been shared with the pupils and parents/carers who have been asked for their viewpoints. This policy represents the consensus view of the staff, governors pupils and parents and represents the ideal policy that we would aim for. This policy was discussed by the staff in Autumn 2019, approved by the Governing Body in Autumn 2019 and will be reviewed in Summer 2020.

Appendix 1

Bullying Reporting form

1. General Information

Alleged perpetrator _____ Victim _____ Witness _____
Year _____ Year _____ Year _____

2. Type of Incident

- a. Physical
- b. Name Calling
- c. Intimidation
- d. Extortion
- e. Isolation
- f. Homophobic

Please tick the appropriate form of bullying.

3. Details of the incident Location _____ Time _____

4. Action taken

5. Follow - up

6. Is this the first reported incident of bullying by this individual? YES / NO

7. Have the parents been informed? YES /NO

Signed _____