



Cyberbullying Policy

INTENT:

The community of Merton Bank Primary School are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our children and staff so they can learn and work in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. In addition we understand the importance of ICT at Merton Bank Primary School in supporting a creative curriculum for all learners.

Bullying of any kind is totally unacceptable at our school. If cyberbullying does occur, all children and adults should be aware of what action/steps they need to take and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Anti-bullying Policy, the Behaviour Policy, the e-safety policy, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (including Prevent) and the Code of Conduct as well as the acceptable use policy and the home learning policy.

The school recognises that a bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying may be defined as 'the use of electronic communication, particularly mobile phones and the internet, to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature: children and adults may be reluctant to admit to being the victims of cyberbullying'. It can take a number of different forms:

- Threats and intimidation, harassment or 'cyber-stalking' (e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts or instant messages), sexting (e.g. sending and receiving sexually explicit messages, primarily between mobile phones)
- Vilification/defamation, exclusion/peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorised publication of private information/images and 'trolling' (abusing the internet to provoke or offend others online). It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target.

However it differs from other forms of bullying in several significant ways:

- By facilitating a far more extreme invasion of personal space. Cyberbullying can take place at any time and intrude into spaces that have previously been regarded as safe and personal.
- The potential for anonymity on the part of the bully. This can be extremely distressing for the victim
- The potential for the bully to play very rapidly to a larger audience so the scale and scope of cyberbullying can be greater than for other forms of bullying.
- Through the knowledge that the data is in the world-wide domain, disproportionately amplifying the negative effect on the victim, even though the bully may feel his / her actual actions had been no worse than conventional forms of bullying
- The difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages as more people get drawn in as accessories. By passing on a humiliating picture or message a bystander becomes an accessory to the bullying.
- The profile of the bully and target can be different to other forms of bullying as cyberbullying can take place between peers and across generations. Teachers can be victims and age and size are not important.
- Many cyberbullying incidents can themselves act as evidence so it is important the victim saves the information.

Cyberbullying and the Law

Bullying is never acceptable and the school fully recognises its duty to protect all of its members and to provide a safe, healthy environment for everyone.

Education Law:

- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) outlines some legal powers which relate more directly to cyberbullying. Head teachers have the power 'to such an extent as is reasonable' to regulate the conduct of pupils when they are off the school site.
- There is not a specific law which makes cyberbullying illegal but it can be considered a criminal offence under several different acts including Protection from Harassment Act (1997), Malicious Communications Act (1988), Communications Act (2003) Obscene Publications Act (1959) and Computer Misuse Act (1990).

Preventing Cyberbullying

As with all forms of bullying the best way to deal with cyberbullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. There is no single solution to the problem of cyberbullying but the school will do the following as a minimum to impose a comprehensive and effective prevention strategy

- ensure that all incidents of cyberbullying both inside and outside school are dealt with immediately and will be managed and/or escalated in line with the procedures set out in the school's Anti-bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- ensure that all policies relating to safeguarding, including cyberbullying are reviewed and updated regularly
- ensure that all staff know that they need to report any issues concerning cyberbullying to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/safeguarding team
- ensure that all staff are aware of the Prevent Duty
- provide training (using Channel online awareness training module) so that staff feel confident to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism, to challenge extremist ideas and to know how to make a referral when a child is at risk
- Provide e-safety training and cyberbullying training through the online modules on the National Online Safety website to ensure all staff, governors and children are up to date on reporting procedures and are aware of the dangers.
- Ensure that parents/carers are informed immediately and attention is drawn annually to the cyberbullying policy so that they are fully aware of the school's responsibility relating to safeguarding pupils and their welfare. (The Cyberbullying Policy is available at all times on the school website).
- Ensure that cyberbullying is revisited as part of the safeguarding essentials programme and through computing sessions in school.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities by providing clear guidance for staff on the use of technology within school and beyond. All staff should sign to say they have read and understood the Code of Conduct.
- Ensure that visitors to the school are given clear guidance on the use of technology in school. This includes how to report any safeguarding issues to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/safeguarding team. Visitors will be given highly restricted guest accounts which will not allow any access to personal data and that any misuse of the system will result in access to the system being withdrawn. Some visitors may be granted access to the wifi through a permitted route set up in advance and in accordance with our BYOD policy.

Guidance on safe practice in the use of electronic communications and storage of images is contained in the Code of Conduct. The school will deal with inappropriate use of technology in line with the Code of Conduct which could result in disciplinary procedures.

If you suspect or are told about a cyber-bullying incident, follow the protocol outlined below:

Mobile Phones

- Inform Designated Safeguarding Lead/safeguarding team immediately and pass them the information that you have
- The member of the designated safeguarding team will decide on the appropriate course of action which could include:
 - Ask the pupil to show you the mobile phone
 - Note clearly everything on the screen relating to an inappropriate text message or image, to include the date, time and names
 - Make a transcript of a spoken message, again record date, times and names
 - Tell the pupil to save the message/image

Computers

- Inform a member of the Safeguarding Team/ Senior Leadership team and pass them the information that you have
- The member of the designated safeguarding team will decide on the appropriate course of action which could include:
 - Ask the pupil to get up on-screen the material in question
 - Ask the pupil to save the material
 - Print off the offending material straight away
 - Make sure you have got all pages in the right order and that there are no omissions
 - Normal procedures to interview pupils and to take statements will then be followed particularly if a child protection issue is presented.

Use of Technology in School

All members of the school community are expected to take responsibility for using technology positively.

As well as training, the following is in place:

- All staff are expected to sign to confirm they have read and understood the Acceptable Use Policy.
- All staff are expected to sign to confirm they have read and understood the Code of Conduct
- All staff are expected to have read and understood Guidelines for Staff when Children are using Digital Devices
- All children are expected to have been taken through and understand how to use digital devices appropriately

If children receive inappropriate contact advise them to:

- not answer abusive messages but save them and report them
- not delete anything until it has been shown to your parents/carers or a member of staff at school (even if it is upsetting, the material is important evidence which may need to be used later as proof of cyber-bullying)
- Do not give out personal details or contact information without the permission of a parent/guardian
- Be careful who you allow to become a friend online and think about what information you want them to see.
- Protect your password. Do not share it with anyone else and change it regularly
- Always log off from the computer when you have finished or if you leave the computer for any reason.
- Always put the privacy filters on to the sites you use. If you are not sure how to do this, ask a teacher or your parents.
- Never reply to abusive e-mails
- Never reply to someone you do not know
- Always stay in public areas in chat rooms
- The school will deal with cyberbullying in the same way as other bullying. Do not think that because it is online it is different to other forms of bullying
- The school will deal with inappropriate use of technology in the same way as other types of inappropriate behaviour and sanctions will be given in line with the school's Behaviour Policy

Guidance for Parents/Carers

It is vital that parents/carers and the school work together to ensure that all pupils are aware of the serious consequences of getting involved in anything that might be seen to be cyber-bullying. Parents/carers must play their role and take responsibility for monitoring their child's online life.

- Parents/carers can help by making sure their child understands the school's policy and, above all, how seriously the school takes incidents of cyber-bullying.
- Parents/carers should also explain to their children legal issues relating to cyber-bullying.
- If parents/carers believe their child is the victim of cyber-bullying, they should save the offending material (if need be by saving the offensive text on their computer or on their child's mobile phone) and make sure they have all relevant information before deleting anything.
- Parents/carers should contact the school as soon as possible so that school are made aware of the situation and the parents response.

Several sites offer helpful advice to parents/carers, particularly with respect to how they can best monitor their child's use of the computer at home. Here are some parents/carers might like to try:

- www.thinkyou.know.co.uk/parents
- www.saferinternet.org.uk
- www.childnet.com
- www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- www.nspcc.org.uk

IMPACT:

Through our monitoring of cyberbullying and through educating the pupils and staff in this way we will ensure that any occurrences are dealt with appropriately, individuals will have the confidence to find support in dealing with incidents and we will create a supporting learning environment for all. Individuals will understand which behaviours are acceptable and how they can be supportive of others dealing with unwanted incidents.

Written by: Lizzy Baker (Subject Leader)

Date: September 2021

Review Date: September 2022

Nurturing a Love For Learning