



**Anti-Bullying Policy**  
**(Based on the Stockport MBC Model Anti-Bullying Policy February 2017)**

**At Mersey Vale Primary School, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all irrespective of race, gender, ability, religion, socio-economic factors and disability. The achievement of all pupils is monitored and we use this data to raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching and learning.**

**We aim to provide our pupils with a firm foundation which will enable them to fulfil their potential. We seek to eliminate unlawful discrimination. At Mersey Vale we believe that diversity and inclusion are strengths, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.**

**Aim:**

At Mersey Vale Primary School we are committed to working with children, staff, governors and parents/carers to create a school community where bullying is not tolerated. Our school is a place where every person has the right to be themselves, to be included and to learn in a safe and happy environment. Everyone at our school is equal and is expected to treat each other with respect and kindness.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at our school. At our school the safety, welfare and well-being of all pupils and staff is a key priority. We take all incidences of bullying seriously and it is our duty as a whole school community to take measures to prevent and tackle any bullying, harassment or discrimination.

We actively promote values of respect and equality and work to ensure that difference and diversity is celebrated across the whole school community. We want to enable our pupils to become responsible citizens and to prepare them for life in 21st Century Britain. These values reflect those that will be expected of our pupils by society, when they enter secondary school and beyond in the world of work or further study.

We are committed to improving our school's approach to tackling bullying and regularly monitor, review and assess the impact of our preventative measures.

**We define bullying as:**

***'Behaviour by an individual or a group, usually repeated over time, where an imbalance of power is used to intentionally hurt another either physically or emotionally.'***

## **Developing a whole school approach:**

At Mersey Vale Primary School we work closely with members of the schools' community to ensure the involvement and participation of students, parents, staff, governors and the wider community as part of the development of policy related to supporting a positive ethos within the school.

We believe that:

- All bullying is unacceptable irrespective of how it happens and/ or what excuses are given in an attempt to justify it.
- We must investigate all incidents of bullying and take action where necessary, supporting both the bully and the victim at all times.
- We must take all incidents of bullying seriously and consider the needs of those affected.
- Children who bully must be held to account for their wrongdoing, but may need support to change their attitudes and behaviour.
- Accountability will be sought in all incidents of bullying, seeking identification of wrongdoing and supporting repairing of harm done through a solution based approach.
- All inappropriate language that perpetuates attitudes underpinning bullying behaviour must be challenged at all times.
- Everyone in our school has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to all instances of bullying.
- We must communicate with parents/ carers regarding any concerns about bullying and deal promptly with complaints.
- All our children must feel safe and be confident that any reported incidents will be dealt with effectively by all responsible adults.
- It is important to focus upon preventing bullying behaviours in school.

## **Identifying and supporting vulnerable children**

We work closely in school to identify particularly vulnerable groups, perhaps minority ethnic groups, travellers, refugees, LGBT pupils, midterm arrivals, pupils who transfer late into the school, children or young people in care, young carers, teenage parents and those with other special needs who may find it more difficult to make or sustain friendships.

As a school we plan positive action to support these pupils with all relevant staff members and provide additional support where necessary, for example peer support through buddy schemes and helping them access clubs and out of school provision.

## **Who is bullied?**

Anybody could be subject to bullying at any time in their life. It is not only something that affects children and young people.

A person is bullied when, either as an individual or part of a group, she or he suffers in any way from the direct result of intentional and persistent harassment and/ or victimisation by another individual or group.

A person who has been bullied may commonly find it difficult to combat victim behaviour or report their experiences to those who may be able to help them.

**Below are some factors that can make people vulnerable:**



Children and young people who are at most increased risk of being the victims or perpetrators of bullying are those who:

- are in foster care or residential homes (looked after children)
- have specific special educational needs (especially on the autistic spectrum)
- have a disability or impairment
- are from minority ethnic backgrounds
- are refugees or asylum seekers
- start a school or activity group mid term
- are, or are perceived to be, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or questioning of their sexuality or gender
- speak a first language other than English
- are young carers
- have suffered bereavement
- have suffered domestic violence
- have experienced physical or emotional trauma
- have a parent that was a victim of bullying

## **Methods of bullying:**

**There are a number of methods of bullying which can be summarised as:**

- Physical aggression – hitting, kicking, tripping up, spitting, taking or damaging property, use of threat or force in any way, intimidation or demands for money or goods
- Verbal – name calling, insulting, teasing, ‘jokes’, mocking, taunting, gossiping, secrets, threats. Reference to upsetting events e.g. bereavement, divorce, being in care
- Non-verbal – staring, body language, gestures
- Indirect – excluding, ostracising, rumours and stories, emails, chat rooms, messaging phones, notes, inappropriate gestures
- Cyber – text messaging, internet chat rooms, the use of social media applications such as Snapchat, Instagram or WhatsApp, burn pages (on Facebook), , the misuse of camera or video facilities (including self-generated inappropriate images), offensive questions (on ask.fm), nasty inbox messages

**We acknowledge that some acts of bullying will constitute a criminal offence and in these cases other organisations will need to be contacted e.g. the Police or Social Care**

## **Types of Bullying**

There are various types of bullying which can be summarised as:

- Racist and faith based – name calling, derogatory assumptions or generalisations about race, culture, religious faiths and beliefs
- Sexual orientation –homophobic, transphobic or biphobic – based on actual or perceived sexual orientation, and can include name calling, exclusion and gestures, negative stereotyping based on sexual orientation, using ‘gay’ as a negative term, warning others about a person, graffiti, etc.
- Appearance – based on weight, size, hair colour, unusual physical features
- Sexual – touching, repeated exhibitionism, voyeurism, sexual propositioning, verbal personal comment or deviant desires communicated
- Disability – name calling, exclusion, talking over a person, mimicking, physical overpowering (e.g. moving a wheelchair), laughing at a difficulty
- Health – based on physical or mental conditions
- Income based – of living on a low (or high) income
- Transgender – based on perception of gender identity
- Caring responsibilities - name calling, negative assumptions/misunderstandings about young carers
- Related to home or personal situation

## **Derogatory language**

Derogatory or offensive language is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. This type of language can take any of the forms of bullying listed in our definition of bullying. It will be challenged by staff and recorded and monitored on SIMS and follow up actions and sanctions, if appropriate, will be taken for pupils and staff found using any such language. Staff are also encouraged to record the casual use of derogatory language using informal mechanisms such as a classroom log.

## **Possible indicators of bullying include:**

We recognise that the following behaviours may suggest someone is being bullied. However we also recognise that the list is not exhaustive.

- disturbed sleep
- bed-wetting
- head and stomach aches
- problems with concentration
- changes in behaviour and attitude
- truanting
- bullying other children
- damaged or missing clothes / money / property
- asking for more money than usual or stealing money
- withdrawn or changes in their usual behaviour patterns or attitude
- distressed or emotional and finds it hard to articulate their feelings
- changes in their eating patterns
- changes in their online activity
- shows evidence of self-harming or even for extreme cases potential suicide
- is unusually tired without a reasonable explanation
- has unexplained bruises or marks on their body (some may refuse to change for PE)
- repeatedly comes to school without a packed lunch
- seems afraid to be alone and requires more adult interaction.

## **To prevent bullying in our school we will develop our wider curriculum to ensure:**

- All members of the school community feel listened to and valued through the integration of Restorative Approaches into all areas of school life
- All children and young people are clear about the roles they can take in preventing bullying, including the role of bystanders
- A climate exists where bullying and violence are not tolerated
- Develop peer support systems to prevent and respond to bullying
- Promote safe play/ social areas
- Audit our site regularly to establish that children feel safe, especially known vulnerable areas
- Ensure that staff model positive relationships at all times
- Train all staff to identify and address bullying

## **Dealing with an Incident**

When bullying has been reported, the following actions will be taken:

- Staff will investigate and record the bullying on an incident reporting form and also record the incident centrally on SIMS
- Designated school staff will monitor incident reporting forms and information recorded on SIMS analysing and evaluating the results
- Designated school staff will produce termly reports summarising the information, which the head teacher will report to the governing body
- Staff will offer support to the victim with the pupil's class teacher/ form tutor. Individual meetings will then be held to devise a plan of action that ensures they are made to feel safe and reassured that the bullying is not their fault, this may involve a restorative meeting. Action plans will make use of mentors, buddy systems, restorative champions and lunchtime monitoring
- Staff will pro-actively respond to the perpetrator bully who may require support, then in discussion with the class teacher, devise a plan of action
- Staff will consider and decide whether to inform parents or carers and where necessary involve them in any plans of action
- Staff will assess whether any other authorities (such as police or the local authority) need to be involved, particularly when actions take place outside of school

**Safeguarding procedures must be followed when child protection concerns arise.**

## **Bullying outside of school**

Bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated, whether it takes place inside or outside school. Bullying can take place on the way to and from school, before or after school hours, at the weekends or during the holidays, or in the wider community. The nature of cyber bullying in particular means that it can impact on pupils' well-being beyond the school day. Staff, parents/carers and pupils must be vigilant to bullying outside of school and report and respond according to their responsibilities as outlined in this policy.

## **Recording and reporting:**

We maintain a system of data collection and analysis in relation to any reported incidents of bullying in school. Termly feedback is made available for governors via the leadership report.

All staff will use the agreed reporting format available on the school network, to alert the HT/designated SLT member of any bullying related incidents.

## Monitoring and evaluation:

We will check through a range of pupil voice, circle work and other activities, the experience our children have of our anti-bullying policy in relation to:

- Being heard
- Being able to report bullying and get help
- Being confident in the school's ability to deal with the bullying
- Being aware that steps are taken to help them feel safe again
- Being helped to rebuild confidence and resilience
- Being aware of how they can get support from others

This overview, together with the data analysis, will be the starting point of the policy review and change in practice.

Signed ..... (Headteacher) ..... (Chair of Governing Body)

Date..... Next review.....