

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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Introduction

This policy has been developed using the DfE Guidance documents Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017) and Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (January 2016) and is mindful of the Equality Act 2010.

Rationale

This policy outlines what Meredale Independent School will do to prevent and tackle bullying. The policy has been draw up through the involvement of the whole community and we are committed to developing an anti-bullying culture whereby no bullying will be tolerated under any circumstances. All members of the school community have the right to learn, work and play in a secure and caring environment free from harm or harassment. They also have a responsibility to contribute by preventing and reporting bullying behaviour.

Our school community

- Discusses, monitors and reviews our anti-bullying policy on a regular basis
- Supports all staff to promote positive relationships and identify and tackle bullying appropriately
- Ensures that pupils are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that pupils feel safe to learn; that pupils abide by the anti-bullying policy
- Reports back to parents/carers regarding their concerns about bullying and deals promptly with complaints; parents/carers in turn work with the school to uphold the anti-bullying policy
- Seeks to learn from good anti-bullying practice elsewhere and utilises support from other relevant organisations when appropriate

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is when someone keeps picking on you because they don't like you or think that they're cooler, smarter, stronger or better than you. Our school defines bullying as:

“Repeated behaviour by an individual or a group, which intentionally hurts others either physically or emotionally.”

Bullying can include: name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments (including the use of the word gay to mean something is rubbish, is wrong, scary or unpleasant); kicking; hitting; pushing; pulling; spitting; taking belongings; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups; refusing to talk to a person and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

This includes the same inappropriate and harmful behaviours expressed via digital devices (cyberbullying) such as the sending of inappropriate messages by phone, text, Instant Messenger, through websites and social networking sites, and sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet.

Forms of bullying covered by this policy

Bullying can happen to anyone. This policy covers all types of bullying including:

- Bullying related to race, religion, beliefs or culture
- Bullying related to LDD (learning difficulties or disability)
- Bullying related to appearance or health conditions
- Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic bullying) including the use of homophobic language
- Bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying, including the use of transphobic language
- Cyberbullying
- Other prejudice based bullying not identified above

Preventing, identifying and responding to bullying

The school community will:

- Have a named Head of wellbeing who is directly responsible for co-ordinating anti-bullying strategy
- Listen and take time to talk to children who disclose bullying, take what they say seriously and investigate the situation, including through the use of the 'listening ear' and 'worry box'.
- Work with staff and outside agencies to identify all forms of prejudice-driven bullying
- Actively provide systematic opportunities to develop pupils' social and emotional skills including their resilience
- Consider all opportunities for addressing bullying including through the curriculum (particularly PSHE and ICT), through displays, through the Golden rules and through the School Council
- Train all staff to identify bullying and follow school policy and procedures on bullying, including recording and reporting incidents of bullying
- Actively create 'safe spaces' for vulnerable children
- Use a variety of techniques to resolve the issues between those who bully and those who have been bullied

Involvement of pupils

We will:

- Regularly canvas children and young people's views on the extent and nature of bullying
- Obtain the views of the school council
- Ensure pupils know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying
- Ensure all pupils are aware of the range of sanctions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying
- Involve student in anti-bullying campaigns in school
- Participate in national anti-bullying week
- Publicise the details of helplines and website using various methods including links on our school website
- Offer support to pupils who have been bullied and to those who are bullying in order to address any underlying issues they may have

Liaison with parents and carers

We will:

- Ensure that all parents/carers know who to contact if they are worried about bullying
- Report back to parents/carers regarding their concerns about bullying as quickly as possible
- Ensure that all parents/carers know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively, promoting this by its inclusion on the policy area of the school website
- Ensure all parents/carers know where to access independent advice about face to face and cyber-bullying, including the use of links on our school website
- Work with all parents/carers and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying

We expect parents/carers to:

- Inform the school of any suspected bullying, even if it does not involve their child
- Encourage their child to report bullying to a member of staff
- Inform their child(ren) not to retaliate through violence in any situation
- If their child has been accused of bullying, work in partnership with the school and listen to evidence

Dealing with Incidents

Where prevention has failed and bullying has taken place we will deal with it carefully. Incidences of bullying will be dealt with most seriously at Meredale Independent School. All staff have access to forms to report alleged allegations of bullying from pupils and parents. It is their responsibility to report any allegations of alleged bullying.

Our two aims are:

- To protect the victim's self-esteem and self-confidence and to keep her or him safe
- To modify the attitude and behaviour of the perpetrator(s).

Procedures

Every case is different. Professional judgment and experience help staff react in the best way. This means the actions below might be amended in the interests of individual students, but in essence what follows are our standard actions in response to bullying.

We:

1. Talk with the victim
2. Talk with the perpetrator
3. Consider setting up a victim/bully meeting
4. Inform parents/carers
5. Follow-up meetings with both the victim and the bully
6. Involve other agencies where on-going support is needed
7. Ensure documentation is thorough

If after investigation the incident is an isolated incidence of poor behaviour rather than bullying, it will be dealt with according to the schools behaviour and discipline policy.

Consequences

In no particular order the following consequences may be used:

- Apologise to the victim(s) verbally or in writing
- Lose privileges
- Lose playtimes (stay with class teacher, write lines or do extra work)
- Stand outside the Headteacher's office
- Spend playtimes and lunchtimes with an adult
- Parents will be invited in to school
- Go on a behaviour report card
- Be removed from class and work in isolation
- Report to the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher
- Be withdrawn from participation in school visit, clubs and events not essential to the curriculum.
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion

These include suggestions given by the School Council.

During and after the incident(s) have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be reentered on a Bullying Log and monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

Support Agencies

The following organisations provide support for schools, parents and children on the subject of bullying.

Anti-bullying Alliance - www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Kidscape - www.kidscape.org.uk

Childline - www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC - www.nspcc.org.uk

Bullying on line - www.bullying.co.uk

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre - <http://ceop.police.uk/>

Thinkuknow - www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Childnet – www.childnet.com