

Anti-Bullying Policy

Last Review June 2024	Next Review June 2026	Review Frequency Every 2 years	Coordinator Head Teacher	Nominated Trustee EC&T Committee
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Introduction

The Mulberry Bush School is committed to providing a safe, secure and positive environment in which children can learn, develop and grow, making full use of the range of relationships and facilities available to them. Children work best in a supportive environment, free from bullying or intimidation. Children at the school are entitled to be treated with respect and understanding, and to participate in any activity free from intimidation. Identifying bullying can be complex when working with children with significant vulnerabilities.

Aims

This policy aims to provide clear whole school guidance in order to:

- Minimise the instances of bullying taking place between children at our school
- Ensure a clear and consistent response to bullying when it does occur
- Reduce the likelihood of children becoming bullies or victims of bullying in future life

Links with other School policies

This policy should be read alongside the following policies:

- [Behaviour Management Policy](#)
- Safeguarding Policy
- [Complaints Procedure](#)
- [Staff Handbook](#)
- [Harassment and Bullying Policy](#) (adults)

Links to legislation

This policy has been written to meet the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.

Responsibilities

Role of the Trustee Body

Trustees monitor the effectiveness of this policy through their visits to the school. They review this policy every two years.

Role of the School Leadership Team

The SLT is responsible for the oversight of the culture of the school, ensuring a bullying free environment for all. They ensure that all incidents of bullying are monitored and that action has been taken to address incidents where they arise.

Role of Staff

Methods of prevention

All staff at the school are aware of the potential for bullying to take place. To reduce the likelihood of this behaviour occurring, the following practices are followed:

- Staff take steps to find out if bullying is taking place.
- Close supervision of children in areas of the school where bullying may happen, including when using computers.
- Staff are supported to feel confident to interrupt and confront potential bullying situations.
- Consistent and fair management of behaviour difficulties.
- Consistent and clear statements about the unacceptable nature of bullying behaviour.
- Help everyone understand that a reason why someone bullies another person may be to do with them feeling bullied by someone else, frightened or unhappy.
- Ensuring children have good awareness of the risks when using the internet.
- Ongoing development work around inclusion, including anti-racism work.

Creating a supportive climate

The staff at the school work very hard to create and maintain a positive ethos and atmosphere in all aspects of our work. This helps to promote healthy, caring relationships between people, and develop socially acceptable and rewarding interactions. Some of the ways we do this are by:

- Valuing relationship building experiences
- Supporting children to be able to communicate openly and honestly
- Role modelling appropriate behaviour
- Promoting positive values
- Teaching good social behaviour/social skills
- Promoting the development of self-confidence and self-esteem
- Rewarding non-aggressive behaviour
- Developing a non-delinquent environment
- Providing a wide range of interesting, engaging activities
- Maintaining a high level of child guidance and supervision
- Working closely with families and carers
- Teaching and supporting children to become appropriately assertive
- Talking with children about issues such as racism and bullying
- Encouraging everyone to deal with disagreements and conflict in non-aggressive ways

Role of Children

Pupils should develop their awareness of what bullying is. They should work closely with staff and their peers to create a bullying free environment. This may be through community meetings, circle time, direct teaching, group work, etc.

Role of the School Council

The school council should raise awareness of any bullying concerns and promote a bullying free environment.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is repeated behaviour that is intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally. Bullying can be carried out by an individual or a group of people towards an individual or group. It is often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation. It can include:

- Physical assault
- Sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour
- Teasing / mocking
- Making threats
- Making offensive comments
- Name-calling
- Cyberbullying
- Spreading rumours
- Excluding people from groups

Bullying also applies to these behaviours when expressed online. This is called online or cyber bullying. Bullying is recognised by The Mulberry Bush as a form of peer-on-peer abuse.

Forms & types of bullying covered by this policy

Bullying can be:

- Physical – hitting, pushing, or using inappropriate physical contact.
- Verbal – name-calling, spreading rumours, using offensive language, or threats.
- Sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour. These behaviours will be treated as safeguarding concerns.
- Cyber/online – sending hurtful messages or images via text, email, or social media. Cyberbullying also includes the use of digital platforms to spread misinformation, disinformation, conspiracy theories, and harmful content generated by artificial intelligence (AI). Staff will be trained to recognise these risks, and the school will regularly review its filtering and monitoring systems in line with the Department for Education's 'Plan Technology for Your School' guidance.
- Attacking property – damaging, stealing, or hiding someone's belongings.

Bullying may be based on:

- Race, religion or belief
- Culture or class
- Gender or gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)
- Appearance or health conditions
- Personal or family circumstances
- Any other perceived vulnerability

School ethos

Bullying is always damaging to those involved. The victim, the bully and those who witness or know about the bullying are affected. For children, bullying is not a natural part of growing up, and should not be seen as such. Research has shown that victims of bullying may be more likely to have mental health problems, and reduced

self-esteem and self-worth. People who bully are likely to experience difficult and unhappy relationships with others.

Recognising the indicators of bullying

Bullying may present through changes in behaviour such as withdrawal, heightened anxiety and/or aggression, reluctance to engage in activities, or avoidance of certain peers or spaces. Given the importance of safe, predictable relationships with trusted adults, we foster a culture where children feel secure to talk about their worries and know they will be listened to. It is vital that every child understands they can report bullying without fear, and that staff remain vigilant to both verbal and non-verbal signs that may indicate distress or harm.

Understanding why bullying is occurring

Understanding why bullying is occurring is key to addressing it effectively and compassionately. In our therapeutic environment, bullying may stem from unmet emotional needs, difficulties with emotional regulation, past trauma, or challenges in forming safe and trusting relationships. Children may use bullying behaviours as a way to assert control, mask vulnerability, or communicate distress they cannot yet verbalise. By maintaining a culture of curiosity, open dialogue, and reflective practice, staff can explore the underlying causes of bullying and respond in ways that support healing, strengthen relationships, and reinforce the values of safety, respect, and belonging.

Implementation

Preventative strategies:

- Build safe, trusting relationships between children and adults through consistent, predictable interactions.
- Ensure a culture of openness where talking about worries and feelings is encouraged and supported.
- Provide children with a variety of ways to express their feelings constructively (including verbal and non-verbal approaches).
- Model respectful behaviour and reinforce positive social interactions among staff and pupils.
- Empower children to speak up by making reporting safe.
- Be aware of the dynamics in the child group, particularly around dynamics related to power and authority within the child group.
- Respond to early signs of bullying with curiosity and care, not punishment.

The following steps should be taken when dealing with incidents:

When children complain of being bullied, or when bullying is observed, the school expects staff to work to the following guidelines:

- Staff will be alert to signs of distress, including anxiety, withdrawal, or aggression, and will consider early help pathways where bullying may be contributing to mental health concerns. The school recognises the impact of bullying on emotional wellbeing and will respond with compassion and appropriate support.
- All complaints should be taken seriously.

- Incidents of bullying should be logged on ClearCare. Frequency and emerging patterns of bullying behaviour are monitored by the DSL and senior staff using ClearCare.
- Children who are identified as displaying persistent bullying behaviour, or who have been involved in a significant incident of bullying behaviour, will be thought about by their treatment team, with appropriate support, strategies, intervention put in place.
- Victims of bullying should be given support.
- Instigators of bullying should be told clearly that this behaviour will not be tolerated at the school. An appropriate sanction may be used, alongside opportunities to apologise or make things better. It is important not to bully the bully, as this is likely to encourage bullying. When incidents of cyber bullying have occurred, restrictions on the access to computers are likely to be put in place.
- Parents and carers, and other people with responsibility such as social workers, should be informed.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

Equal opportunities

Diversity is represented in the books that children see across the School, as well as through staffing, display materials, community celebrations and the curriculum. Each person's culture is recognised and treated with respect.

Bullying based on protected characteristics (e.g. race, religion, gender identity, disability) will be treated as a safeguarding concern. The school is committed to promoting equality and inclusion in all aspects of its work.

Complaints procedures

The school has a complaints procedure which should be used if anyone feels that incidents of bullying are not being effectively worked with by school staff.