



**Meadow Park**

Patience, Guidance and Determination

# **Anti-Bullying Policy**

**Date: Spring 2021**

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## Introduction

**“Bullying has a long lasting effect on those who experience and witness it. But by channelling our collective power, through shared efforts and shared ambitions, we can reduce bullying together. From parents and carers, to teachers and politicians, to children and young people, we all have a part to play in coming together to make a difference”.**

Anti-Bullying Alliance

All children and young people have the right to go about their daily lives without the fear of being threatened, assaulted or harassed. No one should underestimate the impact that bullying can have on a person's life. It can cause high levels of distress, affecting young people's well-being, behaviour, academic and social development right through into adulthood.

At Meadow Park School, we acknowledge Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 which provides that maintained schools must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst students. These measures should be part of the school's behaviour policy which must be communicated to all students, school staff and parents.

We have a duty of care to protect students from bullying as part of our responsibility to provide a safe, secure, caring and friendly school environment for all the children in order to protect them from those who wish to deliberately harm them. Our Child Protection Policy outlines our understanding of peer-on-peer abuse and how we will respond.

Under no circumstances will we tolerate any form of bullying. All incidents of bullying will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

We also acknowledge and support Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that children should be encouraged to form and to express their views and As a Rights Respecting School will work closely with our Junior Leadership Team to hear their views and opinions.

## School aims

At Meadow Park School, we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere free from oppression and abuse.

Our school's core values are at the heart of our approach. They are:

- We belong together as one safe school.
- We never give up on anyone and offer second chances.
- We are determined to get it right; when we haven't, we reflect on our actions and repair relationships.
- We resolve problems patiently; we're not afraid to make tough decisions.
- We help and guide everyone in making the right choices.
- We speak up when something's not right.
- We give everyone a voice, listening responsibly.
- We laugh with each other, always showing kindness and respect to everyone.
- We all learn from each other's wisdom.
- Being here makes all the difference.

Bullying is an anti-social behaviour that affects everyone. All types of bullying are unacceptable. Bullying goes against all of our school values and will not be tolerated within our school.

All students should feel able to tell and when bullying behaviour is brought to our attention, prompt and effective action will be taken.

We are a TELLING school. This means that anyone who is aware of any type of bullying that is taking place is expected to tell a member of staff immediately. A 'telling' school is one where students inform staff when bullying is taking place. If students who feel they are being bullied are to tell us about bullying we will work together to create an atmosphere of trust. 'Victims' know that their concerns will be taken seriously and recognise that investigations take time.

We will also make it as easy as possible to report bullying. Everyone on the site has a responsibility to ensure that we live by our core values and that we all set a good atmosphere round school. We want to make it clear that this responsibility includes:

- Promoting an open and honest ethos that ensures that all members of the school community know and agree with our stance on bullying.
- Ensuring that all staff exhibit positive behaviours, demonstrate our Core Values and become positive role models for students.
- Treating other people with respect at all times.

- Making sure that our actions are not construed as bullying.
- Making sure that we don't do anything that could be construed as supporting bullying. This includes relaying distressing messages, relaying threats, laughing at bullying, watching a fight.
- Reporting to the proper person any bullying we witness or any behaviour which we feel could escalate into bullying.
- Engaging students in reviewing and developing our anti-bullying practices
- Analysing available data to ascertain how the school environment and the journeys to and from school can be improved.

## What Is Bullying?

**“Bullying can be defined as “behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally”.**

(DFE “Preventing and Tackling Bullying”, July 2017)

Bullying is any behaviour by an individual or group that:

- Is meant to hurt – the person or people doing the bullying know what they are doing and mean to do it.
- Happens more than once – there will be a pattern of behaviour, not just a ‘one-off’ incident.
- Involves an imbalance of power – the person being bullied will usually find it very hard to defend themselves.

Bullying can include name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; taking belongings; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours. This includes the same unacceptable behaviours expressed online, sometimes called online or cyberbullying. This can include: sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos.

Bullying is recognised by the school as being a form of peer on peer abuse. It can be emotionally abusive and can cause severe and adverse effects on children's emotional development.

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

- Bullying related to physical appearance
- Bullying of young carers, children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Bullying related to physical/mental health conditions
- Physical bullying
- Emotional bullying
- Sexual bullying
- Bullying via technology, known as online or cyberbullying
- Prejudicial bullying (against people/pupils with protected characteristics)
- Bullying related to race, religion, faith and belief and for those without faith
- Bullying related to ethnicity, nationality or culture
- Bullying related to Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND)
- Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic/biphobic bullying)
- Gender based bullying, including transphobic bullying
- Cyber-bullying:
  - The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, including mobile threats by text messaging & calls and misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. Search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones.

Anyone has the capacity to bully. There are no completely reliable predisposition diagnoses. However, those who perceive themselves as low status within a community, institution or group may use bullying in an attempt to artificially boost their status. Self-esteem is therefore a key factor in whether someone bullies or not. This puts equal opportunities and inclusion at the centre of all anti-bullying work in schools.

Anyone can be bullied – young person, parent/carer/guardian, staff member or volunteer. People who suffer bullying are often perceived by others to be different. Sometimes the perceived difference is individual to that person – shyness, physical appearance, clothing and possessions, accent, perceived inappropriate behaviour.

## Reporting Bullying

Students who are being bullied may not report it. However, there may be changes in their behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absence or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school.

All school staff will be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with this policy. Students who are bullying others also need support to help them understand and change their behaviour. Students who are aware of bullying ('bystanders') can be a powerful force in helping to address it and will be encouraged to do so in a safe way.

Meadow Park School staff are expected to use CPOMS to record all incidents of bullying.

- Parents/carers/guardians are expected to support their children and work in partnership with the school.
- All students are expected to abide by this policy.

### Our School Community:

- Monitors and reviews our anti-bullying policy and practice on a regular basis.
- Supports staff to promote positive relationships to help prevent bullying.
- Recognises that some members of our community may be more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others; this may include children with SEND. Being aware of this will help us to develop effective strategies to prevent bullying from happening and provide appropriate support, if required.
- Will intervene by identifying and tackling bullying behaviour appropriately and promptly.
- Ensures that our students are aware that bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that everyone should feel safe to learn and abide by the anti-bullying policy.
- Requires all members of the community to work with the school to uphold the anti-bullying policy.
- Recognises the potential impact of bullying on the wider family of those affected so will work in partnership with parents/carers regarding all reported bullying concerns and will seek to keep them informed at all stages.

- Will deal promptly with grievances regarding the school response to bullying in line with our complaints policy.
- Seeks to learn from good anti-bullying practice elsewhere.
- Utilises support from the Local Authority and other relevant organisations when appropriate.

## **Responding to Bullying**

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately.
- A clear and precise account of the incident will be recorded and given to a member of the Leadership Team.
- The Leadership Team will interview all concerned and will record the incident which will be kept in the schools Anti-bullying File.
- Key workers will be kept informed and if it persists the form tutor will advise relevant staff.
- The school will provide appropriate support for the person being bullied.
- Any concerns will be fully investigated by the Leadership Team/Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- The school will ensure parents/carers are kept informed about the concern and action taken, as appropriate and in line with child protection and confidentiality policies.
- If necessary, other agencies may be consulted or involved, such as the police, if a criminal offence has been committed, or other local services including early help or children's social care, if a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm.
- Where the bullying of or by students takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including cyberbullying), the school will ensure that the concern is fully investigated. If required, the DSL will collaborate with other schools.
- Appropriate action will be taken, including providing support and implementing sanctions in school in accordance with this policy and the school's behaviour policy. All those involved will be asked to attend restorative meetings in line with the schools restorative practice. If the person who has been bullied does not wish to attend, they will be supported in writing an impact statement.

## Incident Reporting Chart

When a Bullying incident is witnessed by staff, it is expected that staff will intervene immediately and appropriately to stop the incident progressing.
Staff to use CPOMS to select Bullying Category and then appropriate sub-category (Verbal, Physical, Cyber). If Hate Crime is alleged, this must be logged as Hate Crime category.
Staff should outline, in detail, what happened, at all times using a factual description of what they witnessed.
Staff to alert the following staff: Designated Safeguarding Lead, Personal Development Lead, Senior Leader, Form Teacher
Appropriate staff will investigate the incident.
After investigation: Parents/carers will be informed. If necessary, other agencies may be consulted or involved. Appropriate consequences are put in place. Appropriate action taken, including restorative practice, to ensure the relationship is repaired.

### Responding to Cyber-Bullying

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the school will:

- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.
- Provide appropriate support for the person/s who has been cyberbullied and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.
- Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation.
- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include:
  - Looking at use of the school systems.
  - Identifying and interviewing possible witnesses.
  - Contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary.
- Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation. This may include:
  - Support reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content.

- Confiscating and searching students' electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law and the DFE school Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance 2018.
- Requesting the deletion of locally-held content and content posted online if they contravene school behavioural policies.
- Ensure that sanctions are applied to the person responsible for the cyberbullying; the school will take steps to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any additional help that they may need.
- Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed.
- Provide information to staff and students regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online. This may include:
  - Advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply.
  - Providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists.
  - Helping those involved to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain.

The following disciplinary steps can be taken:

- Official warnings to cease offending.
- Restorative meeting between parties (If appropriate).
- Exclusion from certain areas of school premises.
- Fixed-term exclusion.
- Police involvement.

## Supporting Students

Meadow Park School acknowledges that both the victims and perpetrators of bullying will require intervention and support. All forms of intervention and support will be discussed by Senior Leaders and may involve provision planning. Any provision to be planned or referrals to outside agencies will be coordinated by the Leadership and/or Personal Development team. Meadow Park offers a significant range of pastoral interventions and approaches for all students who require additional support.

Students who **have been** bullied will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their key worker or a member of staff of their choice.
- Reassuring the student.
- Offering continuous support.
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- Additional support from the mentoring & therapy team.

- Access to additional personal development resources.
- Opportunities to take part in restorative meetings.
- Signposting to agencies and support groups that can help.

Students who **have** bullied will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened.
- Discovering why the student/s who bullied became involved.
- Establishing the wrong doing and the need to change.
- Additional support from the mentoring & therapy team.
- Access to additional personal development resources.
- Opportunities to take part in restorative meetings.
- Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the student/s.
- Parents/Carers invited into school to discuss issues.
- Signposting to agencies and support groups that can help.

## **Preventing Bullying**

Meadow Park School has a strong inclusive ethos and a restorative, nurturing approach is encouraged throughout school. Emphasis is placed on social skills to develop their understanding of social awareness and how they respond to the feelings of others.

The school also prevents bullying through:

- Creating an inclusive environment that promotes a culture of mutual respect, consideration and care for others.
- Delivering a strong PSHE curriculum and holding focus assemblies and form discussions on wellbeing and anti-bullying.
- Developing a strong Personal Development programme which places emphasis on mental health & wellbeing and anti-bullying throughout school.
- Recognising that bullying can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the community, including adults and children (peer on peer abuse).
- Recognising the potential for children with SEN and disabilities to be disproportionately impacted by bullying and will implement additional pastoral support as required.

- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as: children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities, religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference.
- Providing opportunities for students to explore their awareness of bullying including:
  - Writing and implementing school rules.
  - Signing a behaviour contract.
  - Using Art, Drama or Music to reinforce awareness,
  - Reading stories about bullying.
  - Having regular discussions about bullying and why it matters.
  - Setting up and sustaining a student support scheme.
  - Having access to information around school to inform students about bullying and what to do if they feel they or someone they know is being bullied.
- Ensuring staff adhere to the Code of Conduct and the guidance of Keeping Children Safe in Education, part 1.
- Providing opportunities for students to seek advice and support from peers and mentors.
- Encouraging all students to use technology, especially mobile phones and social media, positively and responsibly.
- Encouraging an environment and culture of digital resilience (in line with the UKCIS Digital Resilience Framework).
- Delivering Stonewall training to all staff on homophobic and biphobic and bullying.
- Providing training to all staff on bullying from organisations such as BullyBusters and The Anti-Bullying Alliance.
- Providing training to all staff on transphobic bullying.
- Celebrating success and achievements to promote and build a positive school ethos.