



## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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## > 1. Aims

The aim of this anti-bullying policy is to ensure that pupils at Merrywood House special School learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied.

## > 2. Defining bullying

Merrywood House, along with the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA), define bullying using the following definition:

*"The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or through cyberspace."*

The ABA differentiates the differences between 'Bullying' and 'Friendship Conflict' issues as follows.

Bullying can take a variety of forms:

- Emotional - being deliberately unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic - because of, or focusing on, the issue of sexual orientation, whether actual or perceived
- Trans-gender – bullying someone trans gender identity
- Anti-disability - bullying related to perceptions about disability and/or special educational needs
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber - misusing the internet, e-mail & internet chat rooms making threats by text messaging or telephone calls misusing associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities

### Friendship conflict

Equal power

Happens occasionally

Accidental

### Additional characteristics

Remorseful

Effort to solve problem

Vs

### Bullying

Imbalance of power

Repeated negative action

Deliberate

### Additional characteristics

No remorse

No effort to solve problem

Bullying in any form, by anyone, will not be tolerated at Merrywood House. We do not accept any form of behaviour which hurts, threatens or frightens any member of the school community. Everyone has the right to feel safe and happy in school and in the playground.

At Merrywood House we strive to protect and nurture the emotional wellbeing of all at our school and believe in eradicating bullying without victimising the bully. Victims will be confident that support will be given, and appropriate action will be taken against bullies to ensure that their behaviour changes.

## > 3. Preventative measures

All members of staff will help to promote a whole-school ethos of mutual respect and will encourage children to show care, politeness, respect and honesty and will teach and promote empathy.

Within the curriculum the school will raise awareness of the nature of bullying in PSHE, circle time, assemblies and during an annual Anti-Bullying Week. Children are taught to celebrate differences of others and their families and appreciate differences in others. The school endeavours to create an environment in which bullying is not able to develop e.g. trained peer mediators, buddies for vulnerable pupils and school council.

Children will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying and never to be a bystander. We strive to ensure that our school continues to be a 'listening school' whereby the children always feel that their voices are heard. We ensure that there are always opportunities for children to report incidents of bullying to an adult or to discuss anything that they feel uncomfortable about. Every class will continue to have a class 'Worry Card' that they can give to a staff member if they have any concerns or worries.

Staff who have been bullied will be encouraged to report any incidents to a member of the Senior Leadership Team so that appropriate steps can be taken.

The school will develop links with the wider community to support inclusive anti-bullying education, e.g. visiting theatre groups, workshops.

All staff will be alert to signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it, in accordance with school policy.

## > 4. Dealing with incidents

When bullying is suspected or reported, the school will do all it can to ensure that there is no repeat of the behaviour, so that the victim suffers no further distress.

Each case of bullying will be dealt with individually, following the guidelines in this policy:

- Suspected or reported bullying will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached.
- A clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- The member of the Senior Leadership Team will interview all concerned and will record the incident.
- Consequences will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned.
- Serious or prolonged bullying could result in isolation from other learners to protect all parties and for rehabilitation of the child. Isolation is only for reflection time and re-learning of social expectations here at Merrywood.
- Parents/carers will be kept informed.

Everyone involved will be informed about how the school plans to address the issues and they will receive regular updates until they feel confident that the behaviour, and any associated problems, have ceased to distress the victim.

Children or staff who have been bullied will be supported using the following approaches:

- Offering them an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice
- Providing reassurance that the bullying will be addressed
- Offering continuous support
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence

Children or staff who have bullied will be supported using the following approaches:

- Discussing what happened
- Discovering why the pupil became involved
- Establishing the wrong doing and the need to change
- Discussion with parents or carers to help change the attitude of the pupil

## > 5. Monitoring, evaluation and review

The school will review this policy every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The CEO will be given termly reports on any incidents of bullying, through the Headteacher's report. This report will include the number of reported concerns, the actions taken and the outcome. Statistical information will be provided to the local authority, as required.

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