Merry Hill Infant School and Nursery

Anti-bullying Policy

Name/Title of responsible committee/individual:	Curriculum Committee
Date issued:	March 2023
Review frequency:	Annual
Target audience:	All stakeholders

The Governing Body shall conduct the School with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement.

Merry Hill Infant School and Nursery is committed to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between different groups. These factors were considered in the formation and review of this policy and will be adhered to in its implementation and application across the whole school community.

The School will promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and will actively challenge pupils, staff or parents expressing opinions contrary to fundamental British Values, including 'extremist' views.

Version	Date	Notes
V1.0	March 2022	Approved by Full Governing Body
V1.2	June 2023	Approved by Full Governing Body
V1.3	November 2023	Updated legislative links

1   Rationale

'Every child should be able to learn in a school environment free from bullying of any kind and in which they feel safe and supported. There is no place for bullying in our schools and communities and each of us involved in education has a role in creating a culture in schools where bullying is not tolerated. No child deserves to suffer the pain and indignity that bullying can cause. We recognise the negative impact it has on the educational experiences and wider development of so many of our children and young people.' (Safe to Learn, DCSF 2007)

At Merry Hill Infant School and Nursery, we recognise that preventing, raising awareness and consistently responding to any cases of bullying should be a priority to ensure the safety and emotional well-being of our pupils. We encourage open discussions around differences between people, we actively challenge prejudice and we celebrate diversity.

The purpose of this document is to establish and maintain a whole school Anti-Bullying Policy which recognises and affirms the right of every child to live and learn in a safe, secure and happy environment regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender or religion.

At Merry Hill, we believe that effective anti-bullying is not simply about resolving incidents when they occur, but requires a whole school strategy and the engagement of the wider school community. We take steps to ensure a consistent approach to all forms of bullying and discriminatory behaviour within a context which promotes positive behaviour through a taught programme of anti-bullying skills and understanding. This is underpinned within our whole school Behaviour Policy in which children are taught respect, effectively communicating emotions and seeking support where necessary, through a therapeutic approach to behaviour. This Policy should be read and adopted in conjunction with our Behaviour Policy.

Merry Hill is committed to working with staff, pupils and parents/ carers to create and maintain a school community where bullying towards anyone is not acceptable and will not be permitted. The School anti-bullying guidance has been developed and regularly reviewed with due regard for our duties and obligations under existing legislation and public sector duties for safeguarding, equality and wellbeing of all our pupils and staff and we take steps to ensure their safety.

Aims & Objectives:
* To ensure our school is a happy and safe place to learn and children are enabled to make their own choices free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour
* To promote positive relationships
* To build a shared understanding of bullying, why it happens and its effect
* To provide children with appropriate strategies to deal with bullying behaviour
* To ensure there is a consistent, timely and effective response to incidents of bullying
* To communicate procedures effectively so that all members of our school community know what they can expect from the school and what the school expects from them

2 Statutory Responsibilities

* Education Act 2002
* The Children Act, 2004
* Education and Inspections Act, 2006
* Equality Act 2006 and Equality Bill 2009
* Statutory duties regarding: disability, ethnicity, gender (to be expanded to include: religion and belief, sexual orientation and age)

3 Links with other Policies

- Behaviour policy
- Online safety

4 Definition of Bullying

There are many definitions of bullying but Merry Hill has adopted the CSF definition:

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

It is important that we ensure that children understand anti-bullying policy and procedures in their own terms. We adopt the 'child-friendly' definition developed by the Anti-Bullying Alliance:

'People doing nasty or unkind things to you on purpose, more than once, which it is difficult to stop.' (Safe to Learn, DCSF 2007)

Bullying can take many forms, but the main types are:

- **Physical** – hitting, kicking, taking or damaging belongings
- **Verbal** – name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks. Name calling is the most common direct form. This includes nasty names about individual characteristics, ethnic origin, nationality or colour, sexual orientation or some form of disability.
- **Misuse of new technologies** – sending texts on mobile phones, sending hurtful messages by email
- **Indirect** – spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusions from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours.
- **Prejudice** - discriminatory bullying against people/pupils with protected characteristics which may include bullying relating to:
  - Race, religion, faith and belief and for those without faith
  - Ethnicity, nationality or culture
  - Special Educational Needs or Disability
  - Sexual orientation (homophonic/biphobic bullying)
  - Gender

We recognise that bullying in any form can have a potentially damaging and long-lasting impact on the mental health of children and young people who experience it. We also recognise that some groups of pupils may be more vulnerable to bullying including:
  - Looked after children
  - Children with caring responsibilities
  - Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children
  - Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities
  - Children from ethnic minorities
  - Children entitled to free school meals
  - Children for whom English is an additional language
  - Children who are perceived to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender
  - Those suffering from mental health problems, including mental health.

Bullying behaviour can include the following hurtful behaviours

- name-calling, taunting, teasing, mocking and making offensive comments
- offensive, threatening or personalised graffiti or other written material
- excluding people from groups

- gossiping and spreading hurtful or untruthful rumours
- kicking, hitting, pushing
- taking belongings
- cyberbullying – including sending inappropriate, offensive or degrading text messages, emails or instant messages, setting up websites or contributing content to social networking sites that is designed to embarrass or upset individuals or collective exclusion of individuals from social networking sites.

We acknowledge that incidents may occur between pupils which may not be deemed as bullying but still requires support or intervention from trusted adults. These incidents may be referred to as relational conflicts. Relational conflict differs to bullying as usually incidents are occasional or occur unintentionally. Usually pupils show remorse and a willingness to resolve the conflict.

Most children under the age of five will at some stage experience relational conflict especially if their emotions are high at the time, but it is not helpful to label this behaviour as 'bullying'. For children under five, most of the conflict is momentary, spontaneous, and often without cognisance of the feelings of the person whom they have affected. We recognise that, sometimes, young children behave in hurtful ways towards others because they have not yet developed the means to manage intense feelings that sometimes overwhelm them. Therefore, we help this process by offering support, to both children. We recognise that young children require help in understanding the range of feelings they experience. We help children recognise their feelings by naming them and helping children to express them, making a connection verbally between the event and the feeling. We help young children learn to empathise with others, understanding that they have feelings too and that their actions have an impact on others' feelings. We encourage the children to understand the meaning of their actions. We also help young children to develop pro-social behaviour, such as resolving conflict over who's turn it is to have a toy. We are aware that the same problem may happen repeatedly before skills such as sharing and turn taking develop. For both biological maturation and cognitive development to take place, children will need repeated experiences with problem solving, supported by patient adults and clear boundaries at school and at home.

5 Role of Staff in School

Incidents involving staff as victims or perpetrators should be treated with the same degree of seriousness as those involving pupils. Schools must be open to challenge and prepared to investigate all such incidents fully and fairly. Further advice related to staff, governor or contractor involvement in bullying and harassment should be sought from the Schools Human Resources Advisory Team and/or the School Governance Team. Teachers record all incidents that happen in their class on CPOMS, and that they are aware of in the school. If teachers witness an act of bullying, they will either investigate it themselves or refer it to the Headteacher. Teachers and support staff do all they can to support the child who is being bullied. If a child is being bullied then, after consultation with the Headteacher, the teacher informs the child's parents.

The effect of bullying on the recipient – not just the intention of the perpetrator – is significant in deciding whether to treat an incident as bullying. When any bullying takes place between members of a class, the teacher will deal with the issue immediately. This may involve counselling and support for the victim of the bullying, and support and appropriate consequences for the child who has carried out the bullying, in accordance with the Behaviour Policy. Time is spent talking to the child who has bullied: explaining why his/her action was wrong and that child is encouraged to change his/her behaviour in future. If a child is involved in bullying other children, the Headteacher and the SLT are informed. The child's parents are then invited into the school to discuss the situation. In extreme cases, for example where initial discussions have proven ineffective, the Headteacher may contact external support agencies, such as the social services, the anti-social behaviour co-ordinator at the local authority or the police.

Teachers use a range of methods to help prevent bullying and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. They use drama, role-play, stories etc., within the formal curriculum, to help pupils understand the feelings of bullied children, and to practise the restraint required to avoid lapsing into bullying behaviour. Assemblies and Circle time are used to praise, reward and celebrate the success of all children, and thus to help create a positive atmosphere.

6 Role of Children

Children are encouraged to tell anybody they trust if they are being bullied, and if the bullying continues, they must keep on letting people know. Children are encouraged to report to staff if they suspect that another child may be being bullied. Children are invited to tell us their views about a range of school issues, including bullying, in the annual pupil questionnaire.

7 Role of the Governors

The governing body supports the Headteacher in all attempts to eliminate bullying from our school. The governing body will not condone any bullying at all in our school, and any incidents of bullying that do occur will be taken very seriously, and dealt with appropriately.

The governing body monitors incidents of bullying that do occur, and reviews the effectiveness of this guidance regularly. The governors require the Headteacher to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying on CPOMS, and to report to the governors on request about the effectiveness of school anti-bullying strategies.

A parent who is dissatisfied with the way the school has dealt with a bullying incident can ask the Chair of Governors to look into the matter. The governing body responds within ten days to any request from a parent to investigate incidents of bullying. In all cases the governing body notifies the Headteacher, and asks him/her to conduct an investigation into the case, and to report back to a representative of the governing body.

8 Monitoring and Review

This guidance is monitored on a day-to-day basis by the Headteacher and SLT, who reports to governors on request about the effectiveness of the guidance.

Evidence will include:
- Incident reports on CPOMS
- Parent/pupil questionnaires
- Worry box
- Reports from staff

9 Legislative Links

Schools' duty to promote good behaviour: Section 89 Education and Inspections Act 2006 and Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 Power to tackle poor behaviour outside school The Equality Act 2010.

The following links may provide additional support to children, staff or families:

• Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
• Childline: www.childline.org.uk
• Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
• Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
• MindEd: www.minded.org.uk
• NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk

• PSHE Association: www.pshe-association.org.uk
• Restorative Justice Council: www.restorativejustice.org.uk
• The Diana Award: www.diana-award.org.uk
• Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
• Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
• Young Carers: www.youngcarers.net
Behaviour in Schools Department for Education
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-in-schools--2

Cyberbullying
• Childnet: www.childnet.com
• Internet Watch Foundation: www.iwf.org.uk
• Report Harmful Content: https://reportharmfulcontent.com/
• UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk
• The UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS): www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ukcouncil-for-internet-safety
• DfE 'Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff':
www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying
• DfE 'Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying':
www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying

SEND
• Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk
• Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
• Anti-Bullying Alliance Cyberbullying and children and young people with SEN and disabilities:
www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/atrisk-groups/sen-disability   10
theeducationpeople.org
• DfE: SEND code of practice: www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0- to-25

Race, Religion and Nationality
• Anne Frank Trust: www.annefrank.org.uk
• Kick it Out: www.kickitout.org
• Report it: www.report-it.org.uk
• Stop Hate: www.stophateuk.org
• Tell Mama: www.tellmamauk.org
• Educate against Hate: www.educateagainsthate.com
• Show Racism the Red Card: www.srtrc.org/educational

LGBTQ+
• Barnardo's LGBTQ Hub: www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_work/lgbtq.htm
• Metro Charity: www.metrocentreonline.org
• EACH: www.eachaction.org.uk
• Proud Trust: www.theproudtrust.org
• Schools Out: www.schools-out.org.uk
• Stonewall: www.stonewall.org.uk

Sexual Harassment and Sexual Bullying
• NSPCC 'Report Abuse in Education' Helpline: 0800 136 663 or help@nspcc.org.uk
• Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAW): www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk
• Disrespect No Body: www.gov.uk/government/publications/disrespect-nobody-campaignposters
•Anti-bullying Alliance: Preventing and responding to Sexual Bullying:
www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/sexual-and-sexist-bullying
• Anti-bullying Alliance: advice for school staff and professionals about developing effective anti-bullying practice in relation to sexual bullying: https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/toolsinformation/all-about-bullying/sexual-and-sexist-bullying/investigating-and-respondingsexual

• Childnet Project DeShame (Online Sexual Harassment and Bullying): www.childnet.com/our-projects/project-deshame