



Merry Hill Infant School and Nursery

Behaviour Policy

Name/Title of responsible committee/individual:	Curriculum Committee
Date issued:	September 2025
Review frequency:	Annually
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 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
V2.0	September 2024	Change in name from STEPs to Therapeutic thinking
V2.1	September 2025	Implementation of a behaviour curriculum named 'The Merry Hill Way' Change to tutors

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1 Governors' Statement of General Principles with Regard to Behaviour of Pupils

This statement has been drawn up in accordance with the Education and Inspection Act 2006 and the Department for Education (DfE) Guidance for Governors on Behaviour and Discipline in Schools, September 2015.

The purpose of the statement is to provide guidance to the Headteacher in drafting the school's Behaviour Policy so that it reflects the values of the school and the shared aspirations of governors, parents/carers of pupils, staff and pupils at the school. It also highlights appropriate legislation and guidance which need to be reflected in the policy.

The Full Governing Body of Merry Hill Infant and Nursery School believes that positive and supportive behaviour encourages/cultivates an environment where every child can thrive and achieve their full learning potential.

2 Rationale and purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish and maintain a whole school approach to positive behaviour, which will encourage mutual respect between members of the school community. Merry Hill follow a therapeutic approach to behaviour management which puts emphasis on the understanding of all behaviour as a method of communication and that the wellbeing of all children is at the forefront of everything we do. We aim to create a culture that ensures that children can learn in a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment and protect them from disruption.

2.1 General Philosophy

This policy is intended to create a happy, caring, secure and stimulating learning environment where everyone will be encouraged and inspired to do their very best.

We believe that high-quality teaching nurtures a positive learning environment and promotes personal growth, which in turn supports constructive behaviour. We endeavour to work together with parents and staff for the mutual well-being of all who are connected with the school. In working together as a community, we seek the best for the children in our care and see the behaviour policy as a part of this goal.

Our emphasis is on recognising and celebrating effort and success, so that all pupils feel valued. Through 'The Merry Hill Way,' pupils will learn three core rules - ready, respectful and safe – and will demonstrate these in all aspects of school and beyond. 'The Merry Hill Way,' will be underpinned by four core values – inclusion, resilience, responsibility and communication - and pupils will be taught how to demonstrate these values and understand their importance within the Merry Hill community.

We instil in our parents and children that bullying and racism of any kind is unacceptable at Merry Hill, as well as all other forms of discrimination by adults or pupils, and any such incidents will be dealt with promptly and firmly and reported to governors and external agencies, where appropriate, in line with our reporting procedures.

There are two basic principles upon which our behaviour policy is based:

- We believe it is our duty to teach, model, promote, encourage, identify and acknowledge positive and pro-social behaviour, not just react to that which is unacceptable.
- We believe that when a child demonstrates unacceptable and anti-social behaviour, it is the behaviour which is unacceptable not the child

Everyone within the Merry Hill Infant School and Nursery community has a part to play in the promotion of high standards of pro social behaviour. It is important that our clear code of conduct is reinforced by a balanced combination of rewards and consequences within a secure and positive

environment. We display our Core Rules around the school and adapt them for different areas and lessons. These are not only discussed with the children but also agreed upon by them.

3 The Merry Hill Way

The following Core Rules have been agreed by staff and children as those being most suitable for our community.

1. Ready – We are prepared to learn, listen and try our best
2. Respectful – We treat people, places and things with kindness and respect
3. Safe – we make good choices to prevent ourselves and others from harm

The following Core Values have been agreed by staff and children as those most fundamental to our community.

1. Inclusion – We welcome everyone
2. Responsibility – We take ownership
3. Resilience – We persevere
4. Communication – We listen and explain

4 Therapeutic Thinking Hertfordshire approach to behaviour

Therapeutic Thinking Hertfordshire is the local authority's preferred approach to supporting positive behaviour management in schools and settings. The therapeutic approach forms part of the authority's behaviour strategy. It has been agreed through the SEND Executive and forms part of Hertfordshire's Local Offer.

The Therapeutic approach is based on the following principles:

- A shared focus on inclusion of all children and young people within their educational settings
- A shared set of values and beliefs
- Open and shared communication
- A shared commitment to diversion and de-escalation
- Shared risk management

At Merry Hill Infant and Nursery School we have two trained 'Therapeutic Thinking' tutors: Mrs Summers and Mrs Kemp.

In March 2025 all Merry Hill Infant School and Nursery staff attended 'Therapeutic Thinking' training in de-escalation, run by our tutors. All staff receive annual refresher training and all new staff receive full 'Therapeutic Thinking' training as part of the induction process.

The training emphasises the importance of consistency and teaching internal, rather than imposing external, discipline. It focuses on care and control, not punishment. It uses techniques to de-escalate a situation before a crisis occurs and, where a crisis does occur, it adopts techniques to reduce the risk of harm. Our behaviour policy supports these principles.

5 Definitions

The term **child** or **children** refers to all children under the age of 18.

The term **difficult** used throughout this document refers to behaviour that a child displays that does not cause harm or injury. Staff may find these behaviours challenging.

The term **dangerous** used throughout this document refers to behaviours that cause evidenced injury to self or others, damage to property, or committing a criminal offence.

The term **parent** used throughout this policy refers to all those with parental responsibility, including parents and those who care for the child (as defined in section 576 of the Education Act 1996). Where there is a Care Order in force (within the meaning of section 31 of the Children Act 1989), the local authority has the power to restrict the exercise by the child's parents of their parental responsibility, if the welfare of the child so requires.

The term **Stakeholders** used throughout this document refers to anyone who is invested in the welfare and success of a school, a child or family. These include professionals from Health, social care and Education but also represent parents and the wider support networks within their home or community.

The term **emotional wellbeing** used throughout this document is defined as "A state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community." (WHO 2004)

The term **Mental Health** in reference to children and young people within this document is defined as "The capacity to live a full, productive life as well as the flexibility to deal with its ups and downs. In children and young people, it is especially about the capacity to learn, enjoy friendships, to meet challenges, to develop talents and capabilities." (Young Minds)

The term **behaviours that challenge** can be explained as follows:

Poor emotional wellbeing is often labelled or described as behavioural difficulties or behaviours that challenge. Poor emotional wellbeing may also reflect the challenges of communication, or the frustrations faced by children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions or other conditions that have a direct impact on emotional, psychological or physiological abilities including children with mental health difficulties who may feel they have little choice and control over their lives. Children and young people's poor emotional wellbeing needs to be regarded as vulnerable rather than troublesome and schools have a duty to explore this vulnerability and provide appropriate support.

Behaviours that challenge can result from the impact of a child or young person being exposed to overwhelming environments, which they do not understand, where positive social interactions are lacking, and/or personal choices are limited. Children and young people exhibiting behaviours that challenge need support and adaptations of teaching and learning to have their needs met and support to develop alternative pro-social ways of expressing themselves.

6 Role of School Leaders

School leaders consistently model pro-social behaviour and implement positive noticing of children who demonstrate good learning behaviours around school. Leaders regularly engage with children, parents and staff on setting and maintaining the behaviour culture.

Leaders also ensure that updates to this policy are shared with school staff regularly. This includes a thorough induction with new staff (inc. ECTs following the ECF programme) where 'Therapeutic Thinking' tutors will deliver the full 'Therapeutic Thinking' training and annual refreshers for all staff.

School leaders ensure that staff receive training to teach learning behaviours and to identify whether a pupil's vulnerability, such as having a special educational need and disability or English as an additional language, may affect how they present through their behaviour.

6.1 Role of Teachers and staff

Staff establish clear expectations with the children in the school at the very beginning of the school year through the launch of 'The Merry Hill Way' ensuring a calm, positive and safe environment for the school community. Staff demonstrate a consistent approach and lead by example so that children have a model approach to follow. Staff behaviour is reflected highly alongside the rules, values and expectations of the school. All adults adopt relational practice and in doing so ensure Merry Hill and its staff are predictable, systematic, consistent and habitual.

6.2 Role of children

All children are fully aware of the three Core Rules and how they apply in all areas of the school. Every child is supported in understanding these rules so that they are able to follow them effectively and provides them with a safe space with clarity of boundaries and expectations. as they are able to talk confidently about positive learning behaviours and what it looks like. Additional provision and adaptations will be made for children new to Merry Hill and for those who need support to remain on track. Children are reminded of the behaviour expectations and explicit teaching time is given to embed this further through the teaching of The Merry Hill Way. Targeted Intervention will be offered to pupils who need bespoke support to attain in line with their peers.

6.3 Role of parents

Parent Partnership is key to a consistent approach to behaviour. Parents have access to our Behaviour Policy and 'The Merry Hill Way' Behaviour Curriculum on our school website. We share our therapeutic approach to behaviour in 'New To' meetings for parents at the start of the school year and year group blogs and weekly newsletters help to keep parents up to date with developments and changes. On-going dialogue with parents is encouraged through our open door policy and morning messages book where parents can make appointments with teachers as and when required. We maintain and build positive relationships with parents through verbal feedback of positive learning behaviours. At times we may arrange formal meetings with parents to discuss additional support that may need to be implemented in helping some pupils in following and staying on track with The Merry Hill Way Behaviour Curriculum.

7 Behaviour Curriculum at Merry Hill

In line with the Therapeutic Thinking approach we believe that to help children and young people succeed we must *teach* rather than *tell*. As a result, our behaviour curriculum, 'The Merry Hill Way,' goes beyond this behaviour policy, it identifies the behaviour and skills we expect each child to master at each key stage.

'The Merry Hill Way,' combines essential PSED skills, Online Safety, emotional literacy and learning behaviours for pupils to master by the end of each key stage. These are taught explicitly in weekly lessons. Assemblies provide an opportunity to implicitly reinforce the Behaviour curriculum with a Core Rule and Value focus and links made to The British Values.

Through our Core Values pupils learn:

Inclusion - to consider the views and feelings, needs and rights, of others and themselves,
Responsibility - the impact that their behaviour has on people, places, and objects, caring for others, animals, and the environment

Resilience - self-discipline and consideration for each other, our surroundings and property.

Communication - how to share, negotiate, and co-operate.

All staff model the behaviour that they wish to see from the children and are consistent in their therapeutic approach to manage behaviour. The learning environment is carefully considered and organised to ensure maximum positive impact on pupil behaviour in terms of space, access, and resources.

All classrooms have a designated Mindfulness Area and pupils are taught how to use it. Staff can suggest pupils can use it as a self-regulation strategy. It is an area to be used purposefully in supporting children in being ready for learning. In addition to this all classrooms have a Feeling Zone where children can name how they are feeling at different points during the day and learn tools to use to support them in returning to feeling calm, safe, and ready to listen and learn. This supports the development of emotional vocabulary and literacy.

8 Different types of negative behaviour

Hurtful Behaviour: We take hurtful behaviour very seriously. Most children under the age of five will at some stage hurt or say something hurtful to another child, especially if their emotions are high at the time, but it is not helpful to label this behaviour as 'bullying'. For some children, most hurtful behaviour is momentary, spontaneous, and often without cognisance of the feelings of the person whom they have hurt. We recognise that 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 affected by the behaviour. We recognise that young children require help in developing emotional vocabulary and literacy. Through following the Therapeutic Thinking Approach to behaviour we believe with sufficient emotional vocabulary children can describe and quantify their feelings and the feelings of others. Additionally, with sufficient emotional literacy they can consciously engage with their feelings (self-regulation) and the feelings of others (empathy). Within the implementation of The Merry Hill Way children in all classes will be taught a feeling word each day which is modelled in context by adults in the school. We believe this will support all pupils' development of emotional vocabulary and subsequently they will become more emotionally literate.

Rough and Tumble Play and Fantasy Aggression: Young children often engage in play that has aggressive themes – such as superhero and weapon play; some children appear pre-occupied with these themes, but this behaviour is not necessarily a precursor to hurtful behaviour or bullying. We recognise that rough and tumble play is typical for young children and acceptable within limits. We regard this as pro-social and not problematic or aggressive. We develop strategies to contain play that are agreed with the children, and understood by them, with acceptable behavioural boundaries to ensure children are not hurt. We recognise that fantasy play also contains many dramatic themes such as blowing up, shooting etc for example and that they often refer to 'goodies and baddies' and as such offer opportunities for us to explore concepts of right and wrong. We are able to tune in to the content of the play, suggest alternative strategies for heroes and heroines and make the most of 'teachable moments' to encourage empathy and lateral thinking exploring alternative scenarios and strategies for conflict resolution.

Biting: Biting is a natural development stage that many children transition through and is typically temporary. Many toddlers and pre-school children bite other toddlers for many different reasons: tiredness, frustration or they may be experimenting or trying to seek the attention of peers or carers. Sometimes biting occurs for no apparent reason. The following steps will be taken if a biting incident occurs:

- The biting will be interrupted with a firm verbal response to the child – the wording and severity will depend on the age of the child. A stop/no hand sign may accompany the verbal command,
- The bitten child will receive care and first aid if required,
- The child who 'bit will be expected to stay by the side of the child who was bitten and help to administer relief with the staff; for example, helping to hold a cold compress on the bite. This is to encourage empathy for the child who was bitten and a consequence such as time to reflect or removal from play.

9 Dealing with Ongoing Behaviour

Strategies used when there are episodes of ongoing difficult and/or dangerous behaviour include the following:

- unpicking an incident with the children involved – gather information, Iceberg analysis;
- Ask what they could have done instead – restorative de-brief;
- Keep a log of events to map any triggers and identify frequency and severity;
- Proactive rather than reactive staff - intervening when indicators of a heightened state are evident;
- Parent meetings to discuss what works and any patterns and trends at home which align with in school observations
- Protective consequences, such as belongings kept in classroom rather than cloakroom or a reduction in time on the playground following discussion with SLT and parents

All strategies that are put in place by staff must be consistently followed, by ALL members of staff so that children are clear about behavioural expectations and understand the consequences of their actions.

As a last resort, if all other strategies have failed, it may be necessary to discuss whether a child should be suspended. No decision will be taken without consultation with the Head teacher, Ms Adams.

10 Rewarding Positive Behaviour

We understand the importance of positive noticing of pro-social behaviour and that it encourages repetition and communicates high community expectations and values to all children. All adults in school acknowledge positive, pro-social behaviours seen around the school, which link to The Merry Hill Way. This type of behaviour will be identified by thanking the pupil for adhering to The Merry Hill Way and showing they uphold the core values. Personalised praise is used to reinforce the high expectations for behaviour and children will be noticed when they go above and beyond following the core rules and values. E.g. "What Peter has done by picking up the coats in the cloakroom has saved me a lot of time and effort. That is over and above, Peter, thank you." Adults are mindful of their body language ensuring positive noticing is reflected in open palms, smiling faces and expressive tones of voice. Adults also celebrate outstanding behaviour by discussing pupils' actions with other staff in the school who work with them, giving the opportunity for this to be fed back to the pupil by another adult, "In the staffroom today Mrs Smith was telling me that she noticed you were holding the door open for the Year Ones after assembly. That is going over and above, Thank you for helping others." This positive behaviour may also be shared with parents at the end of the day so they can reinforce and celebrate it at home. This ensures the recognition system feels holistic – children are praised by staff, their peers see it, and parents are included, reinforcing the behaviour across school and home.

Recognition Board

In addition to ongoing positive noticing, each classroom has a recognition board on display. Each day the children will afford the opportunity to be recognised for going over and above and their name will be added to the recognition board in order to celebrate their efforts. Any adult visiting the classroom will ensure they view the recognition board and will positively acknowledge the pupils whose names are on display.

Celebrating achievements with home

We believe it is equally important that parents are made aware of their child's achievements, so that positive behaviour is celebrated both at school and at home. Staff may share successes verbally at pick-up, via a quick message, or through our existing communication channels such as seesaw, tapestry, newsletters and blogs. Achievements such as being recognised on the class recognition board, or demonstrating a core value in action may be celebrated with parents so that children know their success is valued by both school and family.

Team Points

Our Behaviour Curriculum has a weekly focus on a learning behaviour. This is introduced by teachers and shared with the Merry Hill community through a weekly newsletter. Each learning behaviour links directly with one core value and one core rule and explicit teaching of the behaviour is planned through PSHCE, Esafety and assemblies across the week.

Each child belongs to one of four teams (Green, Blue, Red, and Yellow). Team points are awarded to children who actively implement the learning behaviours that have been taught. Every member of the school community is responsible for teaching, modelling and promoting these expectations of behaviour, both in and out of the classroom. All staff may award Team Points.

Points will be recorded in each classroom. At the end of each week these are collected in to determine the winning team across the school for the week. Team points are celebrated in Friday assembly and examples of pupils demonstrating the learning behaviour will be shared. Following this the coming weeks learning behaviour will be shared.

11 Managing Unacceptable Behaviour

Our focus is upon rewarding positive behaviour however, we recognise that at times children may need extra support to follow The Merry Hill Way. We will always seek to understand what a child is trying to communicate through their behaviour and what additional support is needed.

Staff are trained in the 'Five Pillars of Practice' as designed by Paul Dix:

Five Pillars of practice

1. Consistent, calm adult behaviour
2. First attention for best conduct
3. Relentless routines
4. Scripting difficult interventions
5. Restorative follow up

All staff discretely manage unsettled behaviour by making subtle adaptations to practice, for example, by moving children's table spaces or by giving children sensory breaks. To begin with, staff will oxygenise the pro-social behaviour that they expect to see in others in the class in an attempt to encourage the child to show more pro-social behaviours. If the behaviours continue, the child will receive a verbal warning with explanation; the adult working with the child will continue to adapt their practice to support the child in improving their behaviour and work towards pro-social behaviours.

We understand the importance of appropriate timing when talking to children about their behaviour. It will occur at a suitable time so that it does not affect the teacher teaching and the children learning. The conversation will discuss the desired behaviour expectations, the child's behaviour shown and how it has impacted them, their learning and the learning environment. This will encourage the child to reflect on their unacceptable behaviour and learn strategies to implement next time to ensure their behaviour improves. This will always take place at a suitable time for that child. This may be immediately or a little later on in the day once the child is able to calmly reflect on their actions. If the child continues to show unacceptable behaviour over a period of time, the teacher will meet with parents to implement a personalised behaviour plan. Incidents of negative behaviour are recorded on CPOMS. Where there is a high frequency of incidents staff record these on an ABC (Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequence) form.

Consequences are used in a balanced way and focus on the act and not the child. Children should be helped to understand why their behaviour is unacceptable. A distinction has to be made between developmental behaviour and persistently unacceptable, challenging and inappropriate behaviour. All staff have a responsibility to teach children how to behave appropriately and support children to become a positive member of our school community.

Therefore, all children are given a warning before reflecting on their behaviour at the most appropriate time so that the child can take steps to improve their behaviour. The adult will ensure they talk through the event when the child is settled and calm so they are able to learn what actions would have been better in that scenario so there isn't a repeat of that behaviour in the future.

All staff understand that consequences need to be used with discretion, reflecting on the child and the situation.

12 Types and signs of abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them in real life or by others (e.g. via the internet). Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. Abuse can be:

- physical abuse;
- emotional abuse;
- sexual abuse; and/or
- neglect.

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the School. All staff, and especially the DSL (or deputy), considers the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur.

13 Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children (Child on child)

At Merry Hill, we do not accept any acts or behaviours of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Merry Hill recognises that children of any age or sex are capable of sexual violence or sexual harassment towards other children. It can also occur online.

- Sexual Violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children, or a group of children and both sexes may be affected.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face-to-face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.
- Girls, children with SEND and LGBTQ+ children are more likely to be vulnerable.
- Sexual violence refers to rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault or causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent. These are sexual offences.

- Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature and includes such things as sexual comments, sexual jokes, physical behaviour such as deliberately brushing against someone, or displaying photos of a sexual nature; and online activity including sharing of images or video (sexting/youth produced sexual imagery), upskirting, sexualised online bullying, sexual exploitation or making inappropriate sexual comments (this list is not exhaustive)

Investigating Allegations of Sexual Harassment or Sexual Violence

Merry Hill School plays a crucial role in preventative education, creating a culture of non-acceptance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia and sexual violence/harassment. Children are encouraged to report anything that makes them feel uncomfortable, no matter how 'small' they feel it may be. Upon receiving a report, staff are trained to provide appropriate reassurance to pupils, assuring them that they have done the right thing in coming forward, and ensuring that they do not feel that their report is an inconvenience to the School.

The School's response will be:

- proportionate;
- considered;
- supportive; and
- decided on a case-by-case basis.

Sanctions for sexual harassment and violence may include:

- internal exclusion;
- external suspension; and/or
- expulsion.

The School has procedures in place to respond to any allegations or concerns relating to a child's safety or wellbeing. These include clear processes for:

- responding to a report;
- listening to all those who are involved;
- carrying out risk assessments and/or safety plans, to help determine: internal management of the incident, referral to Early Help, referral to Children's Social Care, reporting to the Governors, reporting to the Police.

To ascertain our response to any Sexual Harassment or Sexual Violence incidents, we will refer to the [Brooks Traffic Light Tool](#) to determine next steps required.

14 Behaviour Stages of Consequences – In class

It is essential that all immediate consequences are directly related and appropriate to the incident that has occurred and will provide a reflective learning experience to support the child.

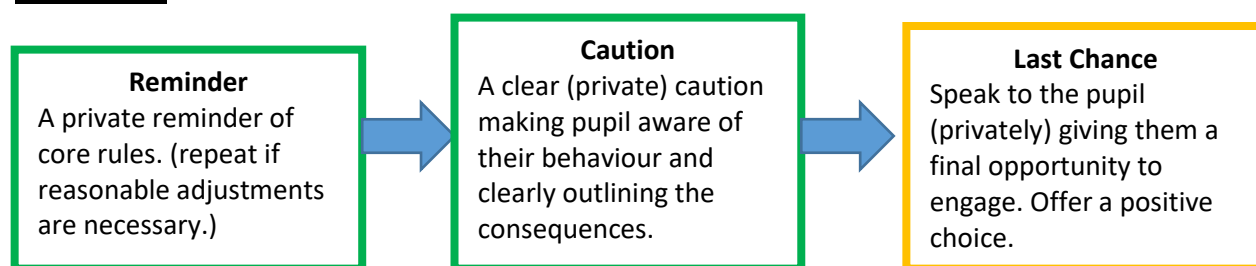
For example, if the incident took place at playtime on the playground where a child has used unkind hands towards someone, the child may need to take some time out and will need to show a kind act towards the child they have been unkind to e.g. help them collect their belongings at home time. If they say something unkind they will need to say kind words to them before the end of the day. Time is made to verbally reflect and discuss their choices and what they would do next time.

Merry Hill believes that all children should be supported in all aspects of their development and that all experiences should be ones that they can learn from. Whenever using a consequence it is important to reflect and/or model the positive behaviour required of the child and ensure that they understand that it is the unacceptable behaviour that is rejected and not the child.

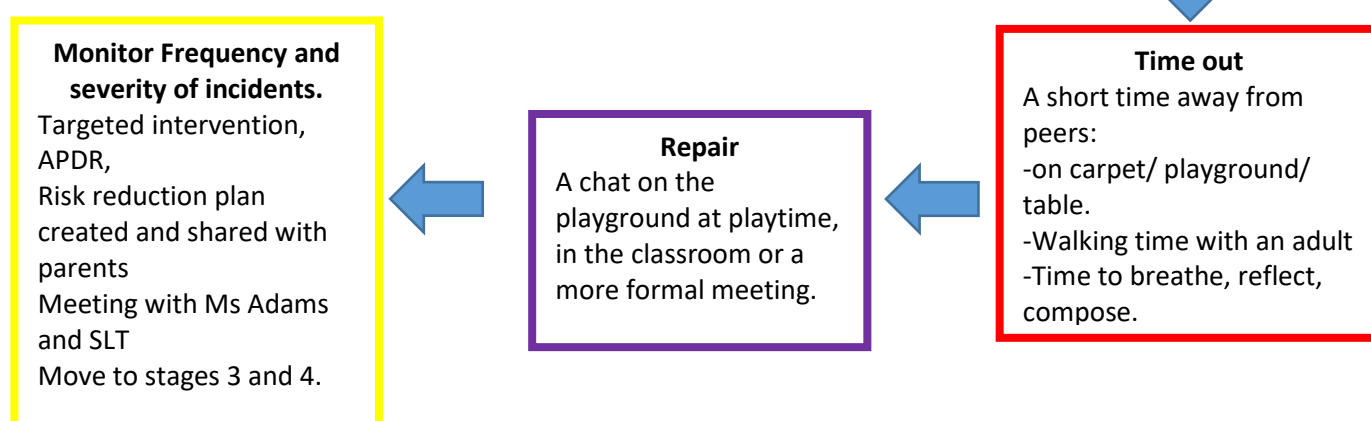
See Merry Hill's Steps of Consequences for Unacceptable Behaviour Table below.


Steps of Behaviour at Merry Hill Infant School & Nursery for pupils

Classroom



This chart shows the pathway that teachers will take to help support you with your behaviour in Stages 1 and 2



Stages of behaviour at Merry Hill Infant & Nursery School for staff			
	Behaviours	Response	Reporting
Stage 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calling out Distracting others from learning Not listening to instructions Saying unkind words to others Use of offensive words (one off) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow pupil stages of behaviour Positive noticing Giving pupils a positive choice Reminding pupils of a time you have seen them following The Merry Hill Way Class teacher to inform parents via phone/ informal meeting 	All incidents and stages recorded on CPOMS 
Stage 2	Persistent Stage 1 behaviours–verbal reminder and oxygenising prosocial behaviours has not worked <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provoking and goading other children Children <u>not being able to identify dangers</u> in their behaviour Behaviour requires adult intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of ABC form to track frequency Notifying all staff to actively observe and monitor pupil Speak to SENCo to discuss strategies Iceberg analysis Arrange meeting with parents Monitor/ APDR individual targets 	

Stage 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violent behaviour towards others – seeking them out and being physically aggressive • Bullying behaviours towards others • Attempting to leave the school grounds • Derogatory or offensive language used in context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STEPs analysis by TT Leads • Risk Reduction Plan created • Action Plan written with SLT • Meeting with parents • Protective consequences implemented following parent meeting • Referral to external support 	
Stage 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent Stage 3 behaviours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of advice from external support • Regular meetings with parents • Reduced Timetable 	

Examples of sanctions may include:

- a verbal reprimand and reminder of the expectations of behaviour;
- offering a kind act towards someone E.g. collect their book bag at the end of the day, say something kind.
- loss of privileges – for instance, the loss of a prized responsibility;
- school based community service, such as tidying a classroom;
- Protective consequences – such as reduction in amount of time on playground
- suspension;
- in the most serious of circumstances, permanent exclusion.

NB: All adults will use their professional judgement and will investigate to determine if the behaviour is age appropriate. The emotional wellbeing of the children will always be at the forefront of decision making.

15 Bullying

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Merry Hill Infant School and Nursery. The definition of bullying describes a bully as '*a person who habitually seeks to harm or intimidate those whom they perceive as vulnerable*'. We believe that children have a right to feel that they are safe from verbal, physical and emotional harassment when they come to school and understand and recognise that bullying in any form can have a potentially damaging and long-lasting impact on the mental health and emotional well-being of children and young people who experience it. Please see the school's Anti-Bullying Policy for more information. Incidents where children engage in inappropriate behaviour towards other children will be managed as described in the school's policy on bullying including, if necessary, the severest consequences. Racial abuse will not be tolerated (see separate Race Equality Policy). Incidents of bullying or racism are recorded on CPOMS and are reported in summary form to the governing body.

16 Behaviour on the Playground

At Merry Hill, we understand that our children are very young and are learning how to conduct themselves in a range of new situations, particularly during their independent time on the playground. In order to support our children during these parts of the day we actively promote positive behaviours and wellbeing through:

- Preparing the children for their time on the playground. At the beginning of the year we teach the children how the core rules apply to playtime. In KS1 we use Friday afternoons to teach children how to play games, how to talk to our friends, how to share to ensure that they are ready to experience time on the playground with a higher volume of children. In Reception staff on duty at lunch times support children by teaching them group games that they can later play unsupervised. This experience can be daunting and over stimulating for some children and we ensure that we have daily practice, reminders and discussions around being safe on the playground through circle times or through assemblies. We also provide the children with strategies to help them in some social situations (not sharing, disagreements with friends etc).
- Class teachers set out clear expectations of behaviour before leaving the classroom. This includes both walking to/from the classroom or playground. The children are shown how to walk sensibly and safely in a line when going to playtime and returning back to class.
- Reminding the children of The Merry Hill Way teaching and modelling it consistently so children understand it in context and the positive behaviour that we wish to see. Core rules are displayed on the playground. All Staff will encourage positive behaviour on the playground by using verbal praise or telling other staff about the good behaviour witnessed.
- Having a clear end to playtime and lunchtime through the following process:
 1. Member of staff to blow a whistle. This signifies the end of playtime or lunchtime.
 2. All children stop in their places in silence, leave equipment and listen to instructions from their adult.
 3. A second whistle is blown and children walk safely and calmly to their designated area on the playground when their class is called.
 4. Children line up sensibly and wait for further instructions from their class teacher.
 5. Class teachers will ensure that they are ready and positioned on the playground to receive the children and monitor their lining up after the second whistle has been blown.
- Mindfulness area on the playground. Children will be able to reflect on their feelings and emotions by accessing a quiet space for calming time or to de-escalate if needed.
- Use of play leaders to support peers by manning a Buddy Bench and playing games with each other. This helps to encourage friendships and good communication skills.
- A carousel of activities offered by staff during the week, which incorporate child-led ideas towards games and activities wherever possible. Children take ownership of activities and this gives them more responsibility opportunities on the playground.

All children at Merry Hill are taught the 'The 3 steps procedure' as a way for children to help tackle unwanted behaviour from other children including their friends whilst on the playground. Our aim is to empower children to be able to resolve difficulties themselves. Staff will be there to support this

The 3 steps are:

Step 1: Say to the person doing the unwanted behaviour **"PLEASE STOP. I DON'T LIKE IT"**

Step 2: If the behaviour continues, child says **"PLEASE STOP OR I WILL TELL THE TEACHER / ADULT"**

Step 3: If the behaviour still continues then the child **TELLS AN ADULT.**

Adults will ask if they have followed the 3 steps procedure first and then will deal with incidents and make a decision based on the above guidance. The class teacher and, in some cases, the Headteacher, must be kept informed of incidents.

At lunch times, LSAs report unacceptable behaviour to the Lead LSA (Mrs Kemp) and to class teachers. All LSAs receive training and policies to support their role.

Successful Supervisors – Beacon Schools

All LSAs are offered The Successful Supervisors training and implement the following:

When dealing with incidents on the playground it is important that the staff member that witnessed an incident follows it up to the point of resolution. It should not be left until the children are back in the classroom as it may affect the learning of the children involved if they have not had time to reflect, repair and restore.

- Remove the children affected to a quieter place on the playground away from spectators
- Establish what has taken place by talking to the children involved.
- Prompt children to find a resolution
- Restorative de-brief whilst walking around playground with staff member
- Immediate praise following incident when child is observed to be actively applying The Merry Hill Way.

17 Extreme Behaviour

The staff and governors will not tolerate any extreme breaches of The Merry Hill Way. Extreme breaches of The Merry Hill Way, including persistent Stage 4 behaviours, may require more drastic measures and must involve the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher so that a record can be made of the observed behaviour or incident.

In the case of bullying and racist remarks, the school adopts the Hertfordshire County Council policies.

This behaviour policy is written for the majority of pupils at Merry Hill School however, we acknowledge that some pupils may need their own individual plan. In these instances, pupils will have individual targets in the form of an APDR which is updated termly with parents. It will likely include advices and strategies from outside agencies following referral (see Multi-agency assessment). The Therapeutic Thinking Leads will work with the staff supporting a particular child to create a Risk Reduction Plan which will be shared with parents and all staff working with the child.

18 Behaviour expectations and pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

Staff at Merry Hill recognise that we must not adjust our expectations of The Merry Hill Way based on whether or not a child has underlying needs. We have a duty to support all children to ensure the effective teaching and learning of The Merry Hill Way through making adaptations and targeted intervention where necessary. With this in mind, we make reasonable adjustments to policy (inc. sanctions) to ensure that all pupil's needs are met and that any triggers towards anti-social behaviours are identified and reduced or removed where possible in order to prevent incidents of heightened behaviour.

19 Suspensions and Fixed Exclusions

Suspension:

In some extreme circumstances, we may suspend a child from school. The reasons below are examples and not an exhaustive list of the types of behaviours that may warrant a suspension or permanent exclusion:

- Physical assault against a pupil
- Physical assault against an adult/staff
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against a pupil

- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against an adult
- Use, or threat of use, of an offensive weapon or prohibited item that has been prohibited by a school's behaviour policy
- Bullying
- Racist abuse
- Abuse against sexual orientation or gender reassignment
- Abuse relating to disability

We define a suspension as being when: a pupil is temporarily removed from the school for a fixed period. This was previously referred to as a 'fixed-term exclusion'. It is an essential behaviour management tool. A pupil may be suspended for one or more fixed periods (up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year). A suspension does not have to be for a continuous period. (Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement, DfE August 2024)

If a child's behaviour poses a serious threat to the wellbeing of staff/ children, or is having a sustained and considerable impact on the learning of their classmates, then it may be necessary for the school to suspend a child. This must always be carried out in strict accordance with the County Guidelines. In such instances, the child's parent/carers will be informed in writing of the reasons for the suspension, length of suspension, steps taken to avoid suspension and how to appeal the decision. Work arrangements will be made so that the child does not fall behind their classmates and a full re-induction plan will be put in place and explained to the child at the first possible opportunity on their return to school. Our school is very successful in avoiding the need to suspend or exclude, using this as a consequence of last resort. Bullying is often misunderstood by children and parents, but the school is adamant that it is never tolerated and always acted upon.

For further information please refer to our Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy. This policy will be considered in conjunction with the following policies:

- Anti-bullying
- Online Safety

Fixed/permanent exclusions:

A permanent exclusion is when a pupil is no longer allowed to attend a school (unless the pupil is reinstated).

The decision to exclude a pupil permanently should only be taken:

- in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy; and
- where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others such as staff or pupils in the school.

For any permanent exclusion, the headteachers will take reasonable steps to ensure that work is set and marked for pupils during the first five school days where the pupil will not be attending alternative provision. Any appropriate referrals to support services or notifying key workers (such as a pupil's social worker) should also be considered. Paragraph 8 provides further guidance on utilising online pathways and the potential significance of SEND law.

If the Headteacher excludes a pupil, she informs the parents/carers immediately, giving the reasons for the exclusion. At the same time, the Headteacher makes it clear to the parents/carers that if they wish they can appeal against the decision to the governing body. For any permanent exclusion, the headteacher will take reasonable steps to ensure that work is set via Online learning and marked for pupils during the first five school days where the pupil will not be attending alternative provision.

Any appropriate referrals to support services or notifying key workers (such as a pupil's social worker) will also be completed by the school. The Headteacher informs the LEA and the governing body of any permanent exclusion and about any exclusions beyond five days in one term. The governing body itself cannot either exclude a pupil or extend the exclusion period made by the Headteacher. The governing body has a discipline committee of between three to five members, including one independent member. This committee considers any exclusion appeals on behalf of the governors. When an appeals panel meets to consider an exclusion, they consider the circumstances in which the pupil was excluded, consider any representation by parents and the LEA, and consider whether the pupil should be reinstated. If the governor's appeal panel decides that a pupil should be reinstated, the Headteacher must comply with this ruling.

20 Multi Agency Assessment for Pupils who display Continuous Disruptive Behaviour

Where the school has concerns about a pupil's behaviour, it will attempt to identify whether there are any causal factors and intervene early in order to reduce the need for a subsequent exclusion. In these circumstances the use of a multi-agency assessment for pupils who demonstrate persistent disruptive behaviour will also be considered. The Early Help Module (EHM) is a tool for the identification and assessment of children and young people considered to be in need of additional support. Other agencies may include Education Welfare, Social Services, Health Services, Educational Services, Advisory Teachers, Chessbrook Education Support Centre, Colnbrook Outreach Service and the police.

21 Restrictive Physical Intervention (See separate Policy)

"Restrictive Physical Intervention" (RPI) is the term used to describe interventions where the use of force to control a person's behaviour is employed using bodily contact. It refers to any instance in which a teacher or other adult authorised by the Headteacher has to use "reasonable force" to control or restrain pupils in circumstances that meet the following legally defined criteria.

- To prevent a child from committing a criminal offence (this applies even if the child is below the age of criminal responsibility)
- To prevent a child from injuring self or others
- To prevent or stop a child from causing serious damage to property (including the child's own property)

There is no legal definition of "reasonable force". However, there are two relevant considerations:

- The use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of an incident warrant it;
- The degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or consequences it is intended to prevent.

Restrictive Physical Interventions will be used when all other strategies have failed, and therefore only as a last resort. All staff should focus on de-escalation and preventative strategies rather than focusing solely on reactive strategies. However, there are other situations when physical handling may be necessary, for example in a situation of clear danger or extreme urgency. Certain pupils may become distressed, agitated, and out of control, and need calming with a brief Restrictive Physical Intervention that is un-resisted after a few seconds. The safety and well-being of all staff and pupils are important considerations. Under certain conditions this duty must be an over-riding factor.

Following an incident where a member of staff has used physical intervention a written record must be made and shared with parents at the end of the school day. Please refer to the Restrictive Physical Interventions Policy for more information.

22 Pupils' Conduct Outside the School Gates - Teachers' Powers

Teachers have a statutory power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives head teachers a specific statutory power to regulate pupils' behaviour in these circumstances "to such extent as is reasonable."

The school will respond to all non-criminal undesirable behaviour and bullying which occurs anywhere off the school premises and which is witnessed by a staff member or reported to the school, including the punishments that will be imposed on pupils.

Teachers may discipline a pupil for:

Any misbehaviour when the child is

- taking part in any school-organised or school-related activity or
- travelling to or from school or
- wearing school uniform or
- in some other way identifiable as a pupil at the school.

or misbehaviour at any time, whether or not the conditions above apply, that:

- could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school or
- poses a threat to another pupil or member of the public or
- could adversely affect the reputation of the school.

In the first instance, the incident will be reported to the Head teacher who will make a decision as to whether or not further action should be taken. The incident will be investigated in the same manner as other serious incidents of misbehaviour such as racist incidents and bullying. Consequences used by the school for discipline are set out in the Consequences section above. It may also be necessary to meet with parents/carers and involve outside agencies if appropriate.

23 Searching, Screening and Confiscation

Although teachers at Merry Hill recognise the young age of the pupils and do not intend to search them, it is important to recognise that members of staff do have the power to search without consent for 'prohibited items,' including stolen items and weapons of any kind.

School staff can seize any prohibited item found as a result of a search. They can also seize any item, however found, which they consider harmful or detrimental to school discipline.

24 Pastoral Care for Staff Accused of Misconduct

As employers, schools and local authorities have a duty of care towards their employees. It is important that schools provide appropriate pastoral care to all members of staff. Any staff member that has a malicious accusation made against them shall be given support and counselling where necessary. Staff shall be interviewed to determine the circumstances and parents of the pupil shall be kept informed throughout. Often pupils have made the accusation as a result of an unmet need and don't realise the serious consequences of their actions. Where necessary outside agencies will be consulted.

25 Review

These procedures should be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure consistency of approach.