

# Mercia School

## Preventing Bullying

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This policy has been approved by the Local Governing Body and has been signed by the Chair of Governors	
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#### Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.



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### Preventing Bullying Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Demanding Excellent Behaviour policy, and the School Exclusion policy. This policy follows the guidance and legislation set out in: DfE guidance (July 2017) 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders and Governors'. Available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>

#### 1. Principles:

Mercia is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe establishment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a positive and secure environment. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in the school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to inform staff and be confident that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

#### 2. Aims:

The overall aim of this policy is the prevention of bullying. Should instances of bullying occur, this policy will help staff and pupils to deal with it effectively.

In this respect the school seeks:

- To ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, without fear of being bullied;
- To ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of the nature and types of bullying that may occur, both in and out of school; their causes and effects;
- To ensure high expectations of pupils' behaviour, as detailed in the school's Demanding Excellent Behaviour policy;
- To ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware that bullying is totally unacceptable;
- To ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities in addressing bullying issues;
- To develop effective strategies to prevent bullying;
- To provide a consistent school response to any bullying and have clear procedures for dealing with incidents;
- To use all pupils, staff and parents as a positive resource in the elimination of any form of bullying, drawing on peer pressure as a means of preventing bullying;
- To provide support for both victim and bully.

#### 3. Definition:

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, by an individual or a group, which intentionally hurts another individual, physically or emotionally, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is often difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

It can happen anywhere, both in and out of school.

Bullying can have a negative life-long impact. It can make it difficult for children to learn and can have a lasting detrimental effect on their lives. Young people who have been bullied can become anxious and withdrawn, depressed or aggressive. (Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour). <sup>3</sup>



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### **4. Bullying will not be tolerated at Mercia School.**

Bullying can take various forms, including:

- Racial/Religious/Cultural – where someone is made to feel inferior because of their background, culture or religion;
- Sexual/sexist - bullying based on something specifically linked to gender;
- Homophobic - bullying based on sexual orientation;
- Disability - any exploitation of a particular aspect of a child's disability and/or special educational needs;
- Cyber-bullying via technology. For example, internet/mobile phones, email, social networks, text messages, photographs;
- Bullying can include name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, pushing, taking belongings, inappropriate touching, producing offensive graffiti, spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours or regularly excluding someone from groups or games;
- It is also bullying when a young person is pressured to act against their will by others or is harassed by unwanted conduct, which violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or humiliating environment.

### **5. Cyber bullying:**

Cyber bullying can take place at any time that someone logs on or picks up a phone, and often invades people's personal time and space. Cyber bullying can involve many people e.g. social networking sites. Images or text messages can be passed quickly from one person to another or via shared websites. This makes it hard to control.

Mercia school encourages pupils to use social media responsibly and for parents to monitor their child's use. Mercia has a no mobile phone rule to eradicate cyber bullying whilst at school.

Any harassment or bullying of any member of the school community, including staff, in or out of school, by pupils, parents or staff, will not be tolerated and the perpetrator will be dealt with robustly.

### **6. Signs and symptoms of bullying:**

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a child:

- Is unwilling to go to school;
- Is frequently absent from school;
- Changes his or her usual routine;
- Becomes anxious, withdrawn or is lacking in confidence;
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away;
- Frequently feels ill in the morning;
- Demonstrates changes in work patterns;
- Has possessions which are damaged or 'go missing';
- Asks for money or starts stealing money;



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### 6. Signs and symptoms of bullying (continued):

- Has unexplained injuries;
- Stops eating;
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable;
- Is bullying other children or siblings;
- Is frightened to say what's wrong;
- Is evasive or gives improbable excuses in relation to any of the above.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems or circumstances, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

### 7. Action to prevent bullying:

Staff have a range of appropriate strategies and opportunities to call upon to educate children on bullying. These may include:

- Skilled observation to recognise and respond to the symptoms noted above;
- Ready receipt of reports of bullying behaviour, which are then acted upon and the information relating to the alleged bully and their victims reported as appropriate;
- The school curriculum and Mastery Time embrace the topic of bullying, including its dangers, how to prevent it and the steps to take when it occurs;
- Pupils will always be placed in seating plans in lessons and during family dining to ensure that no one pupil feels isolated;
- Use, of other elements of school life to educate our pupils, including assemblies, house culture and enrichment;
- Focused training, for example in safe use of the internet;
- Availability of this policy on the school's website to enable parents to understand the school's approach and work together with staff;
- Close parent/teacher liaison to ensure that both home and school work together to help and support the victim and moderate the behaviour of the bully;
- Where appropriate, and following discussion with the Headteacher, engagement with outside assistance, such as an educational psychologist, social worker or the police;
- Ensuring that staff are fully aware of times and places when bullying is most likely to occur; organisation of the school day and supervision arrangements reduce the likely incidence of bullying. This includes supervision on corridors, monitoring the use of toilets and the regular coverage of secluded areas at break times by duty staff;
- All children given the opportunity to speak to a member of staff, usually their form tutor, although every member of staff will be approachable;
- Ensuring this policy is in synergy with the Demanding Excellent Behaviour policy so that all concerned are aware of the appropriate procedures and sanctions.

### 8. Roles and Responsibilities:

The whole community must understand bullying is not tolerated and the steps that will be taken to prevent and to respond.

#### The Headteacher:

The Head will be informed of any incidents of bullying and will ensure that all incidents are thoroughly investigated and properly logged. The Headteacher will then collaborate with the school staff in ensuring that an investigation takes place in every case and each situation is treated seriously. If bullying is found to have occurred, the parents of any children involved will be contacted and informed of what action the school will take.



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The Headteacher will ensure that all staff undertake appropriate training in acting against bullying.

### **Senior Team:**

The main roles of Senior Team in respect of bullying are:

- Manage and monitor practices to ensure alignment with the school anti-bullying policy and procedures;
- Maintaining a clear overview of the incidence of bullying and the school's anti-bullying prevention and response strategies;
- Liaison with the Head and between all parties involved, including parents;
- Ensuring that incidents are recorded by staff in all cases and that a copy is stored on the child's file;
- On a regular basis, analysis of data so that patterns and trends can be identified and used to improve policy and practice;
- Governors are made aware of the number and nature of bullying incidents;
- Promotion and co-ordination of anti-bullying initiatives and projects both within the curriculum and in the wider aspects of school life .

### **All staff, including trust employees:**

All staff are expected to be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with school policy. If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident must be treated with the appropriate degree of urgency by the member of staff who has been approached.

Any suspicion or reports of bullying should be recorded in detail, logged using the school's incident reporting system and passed on to the Headteacher. In their absence, report the matter to a Senior Team member.

### **9. In any case where bullying is reported or suspected, staff must follow this procedure:**

- In most cases the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who is approached/confided, although the form tutor may be included to fully investigate;
- Listen carefully and intently;
- Reassure the child that you are sympathetic and that the problem will be resolved;
- Do not ask any leading questions;
- Do not promise to keep the issue confidential – it is important to maintain the pupil's trust by remaining honest;
- Make a clear account of the conversation on an incident slip as soon as it has ended, but try to avoid taking notes during discussion;
- Report the matter as soon as is practical to the Headteacher. In their absence, report the matter to a member of the Senior Team;
- Discuss with the Headteacher how to proceed with, for example, further interviews, liaison with parents and what action is to be taken, in accordance with the school's behaviour policy;
- Continue to address the incident as agreed with the Headteacher;
- Ensure that the incident continues to be fully recorded, together with details of what action has been taken;
- Liaise with the Headteacher to ensure that all staff are kept informed of the incident and action taken, as appropriate;
- Remember that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person;
- Ensure that appropriate support is provided for all parties concerned.



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### **10. Investigating bullying incidents:**

The following points need to be considered:

- The alleged perpetrator(s) should be interviewed as soon as possible after a report is received, without undue reference to the source of information already held if possible;
- During any investigation involving pupils there is a possibility that some pupils may be interviewed who have nothing to do with the situation;
- Where there is more than one alleged perpetrator, every reasonable effort should be made to ensure that they are interviewed separately without having the opportunity to confer first;
- When an investigation has reached a conclusion, all notes of meetings and communications must be filed and records placed on the appropriate pupil file

### **11. Information and guidance for pupils:**

As a member of the school, you will not have to put up with any form of bullying behaviour. We can and will help to put a stop to it.

You should feel free to speak out to your parents or any teacher if you are being bullied. We can help you to cope with it straight away. When someone else is being bullied or is in distress, inform a member of staff immediately.

Do not put up with bullies in your group of friends. Bullies will soon stop if they are left out or are by themselves. Take care how you speak and act towards other pupils. Always aim to be considerate and helpful.

### **Information and guidance for parents:**

Please encourage your child to talk to a member of staff if they have any concerns. Equally, please contact your child's form tutor to discuss any matters that concern.

### **Help Organisations:**

KIDSCAPE Parents Helpline 0845 1 205 204

Childline 0800 1111

Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222

Bullying Online [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)