



Learning, Growing, Achieving – TOGETHER

St Meryl School

Anti-Bullying Policy

1: Our philosophy, approach, legal background

At St Meryl School we believe that:

- All members of the school community have the right to feel safe in school
- All members of the school community have the right not to experience prejudice and hurtful behaviour at school, whether or not it is directed at them
- All reported and witnessed bullying incidents should be treated seriously and responded to consistently
- Intervention should support and empower pupils who have experienced bullying rather than encouraging a view of them as victims

We are committed to actively promoting safeguarding, wellbeing and anti-bullying behaviours and this policy is part of a suite of policies designed to achieve this including; Child Protection, Behaviour for Learning, the School's Equalities Plan, the School's Accessibility Plan amongst others.

St Meryl School is committed to working with staff, pupils and parents and carers to create and maintain a school community where bullying is not tolerated. This policy has been developed with due regard for our duties and obligations under existing legislation and public sector duties for the safeguarding and wellbeing of all our pupils and we will take all steps to ensure their safety.

The key legislation, government policies and guidance which have influenced the writing of this policy includes the Education Act 2011, The Children and Families Act, 2014, the

Education and Inspections Act, 2006, the Equality Act 2010 and Equality Bill 2009 and statutory duties regarding safeguarding.

Our definition of bullying:

While there is no single definition of bullying, the Department for Education provides the following guidance:

‘Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school’s first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case.’ (“Preventing and Tackling Bullying” DfE 2011).

At St Meryl School we agree with this and would add that bullying is further defined by being:

1. Behaviour that is intended to cause distress
2. Behaviour that is repeated
3. Where there is an imbalance of power between the perpetrator of bullying and the target

Bullying behaviour:

Bullying can take place between pupils, between pupils and staff or between staff, and can include:

- name-calling, taunting, mocking and making offensive comments
- offensive graffiti
- 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 via the internet, setting up websites designed to embarrass or upset individuals or excluding them from social networking sites.

Pupils could be bullied for a variety of reasons including:

- ethnic background, religion or culture
- disability, special educational needs or being particularly able, gifted and talented
- sexual orientation
- gender (including sexualised bullying)
- size, appearance or health conditions
- social or economic status (poverty, class)
- age/maturity
- home circumstances – certain groups such as pupils in public care, or young carers, or those with same sex parents/carers or whose parents/carers have mental health difficulties may be particularly vulnerable.

The local authority states that *'The effect of behaviour on the recipient– not just the intention of the perpetrator – is significant in deciding whether to treat an incident as bullying. Single incidents of hurtful behaviour may still leave the targeted pupil fearful of repetition and should always be addressed. This is particularly relevant to cyberbullying, when a single incident may have an ongoing impact. It is recommended that schools designate as bullying any hurtful behaviour that leads to fear of recurrence.'* (Preventing and Responding to Bullying)

2: Roles and responsibilities across the school

At St Meryl School it is the responsibility of everyone to prevent and respond to bullying. Everyone has the responsibility to report bullying behaviour. The Head Teacher, Mr Craig Davies keeps a record of bullying incidents. Our Safeguarding Governor, Mrs Davina Raftery, monitors the overall effectiveness of this policy.

Governors have the following role and responsibilities:

- to promote the wellbeing and ensure the safeguarding of all pupils in the school
- to ensure the school carries out both the letter and the spirit of the legislation and statutory duties, and observes national and local guidance
- to provide leadership to ensure the development, implementation and regular review of the anti-bullying policy
- to ensure that policy and good practice is reflected in the school's anti-bullying practice
- Through consultation with all stakeholders, to develop a written statement of principles regarding the anti-bullying work of the school
- to guide the Head Teacher in determining and implementing measures, based on the statement of principles, which promote good behaviour throughout the whole school community
- to make anti-bullying a regular item at governor meetings

- to publish and keep under annual review the anti-bullying policy
- to ensure the policy includes references to age, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion and belief, sexual orientation, class, poverty and any other local issues appropriate to the school context
- to review the policy and ensure that it is informed by, and responsive to feedback and the experiences of pupils, parents/carers and staff
- to ensure that the school makes use of monitoring data and understands its implications for the development of policies, procedures and practice
- to provide leadership to ensure a consistent response to all incidents of bullying and harassment
- to ensure the development and publication of a complaints procedure
- to record, investigate and respond to any complaints from parents/carers or the wider community related to the school's response to bullying
- to provide an appropriate and consistent role model for all staff, pupils and the wider school community
- to celebrate and share examples of good practice from the school and among individual staff and pupils

The Head Teacher and senior staff have the following responsibilities:

- to build and maintain a school ethos which is welcoming, supportive and inclusive of all pupils, parents/carers and staff
- to promote the wellbeing and ensure the safeguarding of all pupils in the school
- to provide support for the governors through the development and implementation of an effective anti-bullying policy
- to ensure the voice of pupils, staff, parents and carers is heard and communicated to governors
- with the advice and guidance of governors and through consultation with and/or feedback from staff, pupils, parents/carers and other stakeholders, to develop, implement and review anti-bullying policy and measures which promote good behaviour, respect for others, and self-discipline amongst pupils
- to ensure the effective communication of the policy to all pupils, staff and stakeholders
- to ensure that pupils, staff, parents/carers and other stakeholders are involved in the creation of a positive school ethos
- to take action to prevent all forms of bullying
- to ensure that the school's anti-bullying policy and related practice is complied with consistently and effectively
- to make sure that effective monitoring procedures are developed, operated and maintained
- to ensure all staff (including support staff) regularly receive appropriate training to enable them to recognise and prevent all forms of bullying and ensure they are clear about their roles and responsibilities in preventing and responding to bullying
- to develop and implement a system for recording incidents of bullying and hurtful behaviour which staff know and use consistently
- to ensure that appropriate support systems are in place to prevent and respond to bullying, including peer support programmes
- to use partnerships and multi-agency approaches to prevent, and/or respond to, bullying which happens off-site

- to provide structures and systems that respond effectively to pupils' views and ensure that all staff, pupils and other stakeholders are supported to participate in the review and impact assessment of behaviour and anti-bullying policies
- to monitor the continued progress and self-esteem of the targets and perpetrators of bullying
- to ensure evidence of the impact of anti-bullying policy and practice is reflected in the SEF
- to celebrate and share the anti-bullying work of the school and its pupils and highlight good practice
- to act as appropriate role models for all managers, staff, parents and pupils
- to respond appropriately to stakeholder consultation and make sure suggestions, opinions and concerns are included in policy review and impact assessment
- to involve external agencies (including local authority advisers, police, independent mediation or advocacy services etc) as appropriate to respond to incidents

All teaching and support staff have the following responsibilities:

- to contribute to building and maintaining a school ethos which is welcoming, supportive and inclusive of all pupils and staff
- to promote the wellbeing and ensure the safeguarding of all pupils in school
- to behave with respect and fairness to all pupils, carrying out the letter and spirit of the anti-bullying and equalities policies
- to observe and implement the school's anti-bullying, racist incidents, behaviour and equalities policies and practices including the keeping of relevant records of incidents
- to contribute to consultations, reviews and impact assessments
- to develop and support curriculum opportunities to promote equalities and address bullying
- to provide a consistent response to incidents of bullying and hurtful behaviour whatever its nature or motivation
- to provide support to both the targets and perpetrators of bullying
- to take part in relevant professional development and maintain awareness about their role and responsibilities in preventing and responding to bullying and promoting equalities
- to model positive attitudes and relationships
- to promote the wellbeing of all pupils and take steps to ensure freedom from bullying and harassment
- to promote a positive view of difference and challenge prejudice and stereotypical views both through classroom practice and by modelling the behaviour and values they are trying to instil
- to raise issues with line managers which could contribute to policy review and development

Pupils have the following responsibilities:

- to report any incidents of bullying to a member of staff, whether directed at themselves or at somebody else
- to take responsibility for personal behaviour and actions and treat one another with respect and kindness
- with the help of staff and parents/carers, to create a positive working atmosphere within school where bullying is regarded as unacceptable, difference is celebrated and discrimination is actively challenged

- to respond to requests for information, opinions and suggestions to help improve the anti-bullying work of the school
- to actively support the school's peer support system/s

Parents/carers have the following responsibilities:

- to demonstrate positive support for the school's anti-bullying and behaviour policies
- to model appropriate behaviour at all times within the school grounds
- to report to the school any concerns regarding pupils involved in bullying
- to support work undertaken by the school to promote equalities, celebrate difference and challenge discrimination
- to respond to requests from the school to provide feedback on the anti-bullying policy and procedures.

3: Preventing and responding to bullying incidents

The school has the following strategies in place to:

Prevent bullying

- An anti-bullying ethos which is reinforced throughout the school community • Curriculum opportunities (e.g. JIGSAW, RSHE) and whole school
- Staff training
- Working with parents and carers including educating them about e-safety and to monitor their children's use of devices and the internet (see our E-safety policy)

Respond to bullying

- Procedures for responding to alleged bullying incidents
- Support for those engaging in bullying behaviour, for those who are bullied, for bystanders and witnesses and for parents/carers
- Data recording to monitor trends, issues and hotspots

Preventing bullying

Promoting an anti-bullying ethos

We aim to ensure that all policies and procedures designed to prevent bullying and discrimination and to promote equality are made explicit to all members of the school community by:

- displaying material around the school by a variety of means (posters, website etc.)
- providing information on policy and practice to parents/carers, staff and visitors both in literature and on the website
- teaching pupils how to raise their concerns and how to help each other respond assertively to bullying
- using curriculum opportunities to address the issues
- making sure all staff (teachers, teaching assistants and other support staff) are trained to model appropriate behaviour and challenge bullying according to school guidance. Above all, pupils are encouraged to become actively and increasingly involved in the anti-bullying work of the school. We train pupils to be part of age-appropriate peer support systems such as buddying and peer mediation and this helps them be active in the anti-bullying ethos of the school and facilitate their development of higher level skills.

Curriculum opportunities

We aim to ensure that a range of opportunities are offered and planned to educate children about bullying throughout the curriculum including circle time, assemblies and elsewhere.

This helps pupils to develop knowledge and skills in relation to:

- understanding the nature of bullying and its links to discrimination and prejudice
- strategies for responding to bullying directed at themselves and others •
- choosing not to be involved in bullying behaviours
- understanding what cyberbullying is and how to report it (see our E-safety policy)
- the promotion of emotional health and wellbeing, resilience and self-esteem
- the development of empathy and relationship skills

Staff training

At St Meryl School we believe that the training of teaching and support staff on anti-bullying is essential.

Parents and carers

Parents should contact the class teacher in the first instance if they are concerned about bullying. Teachers will listen to concerns and record and pass on appropriate information to the Head Teacher if necessary.

If parents/carers wish to take matters further, they should contact the Deputy Head Teacher or the Head Teacher who will investigate further.

If the situation remains unresolved, having gone through the school's normal procedures, the school may refer parents/carers to the Hertfordshire school complaints team or to relevant independent agencies such as Hertfordshire's Mediation or Advocacy Services.

Parents' alternative recourse is to make a formal complaint to the governing body.

Other support for parents:

Hertfordshire's Mediation and Advocacy Services Additional support for parents and schools Mediation Herts provides a free, independent and confidential service for parents/carers and schools, where bullying issues remain unresolved. It has been jointly established by Mediation Hertfordshire and Parentline Plus.

For more information: www.mediationherts.org.uk/mediation/about-other-mediation. Hertfordshire's Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Advocacy service is an independent, free, confidential countywide service which can offer support to parents/carers of pupils experiencing racist incidents at school. They can listen, advise and/or represent parents/carers in seeking to find a positive resolution.

For more information: www.thegrid.org.uk/learning/mecs/communities/advocacy.shtml Further support for parents/carers can be found at

www.hertsdirect.org/scholearn/atschool/behaviour/schoolbullying/ or from Parentline Plus on 0808 800 2222.

Responding to bullying

In resolving bullying incidents and evaluating the effectiveness of policy and practice we take action to deliver positive outcomes for:

- the individuals directly involved
- others indirectly involved (e.g. witnesses, bystanders, peer supporters)
- the whole school community.

Support for pupils

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a form tutor/class teacher or member of staff of their choice
- reassuring the pupil that they have done the right thing by making a report and that the school will be responding
- offering continuous support
- ensuring safety
- working to restore self-esteem and confidence.

Pupils who have bullied will be helped by:

- discussing what happened
- discovering why they became involved
- exploring different perspectives as appropriate
- establishing all hurtful behaviour and the need to change
- informing parents or guardians to support change in the pupil.

4: Recording and reporting bullying

The school follows recommended procedures for recording and reporting bullying. Class teachers keep records of all hurtful incidents.

The Head Teacher records all serious bullying and racist incidents or those perceived to be so.

In recording and reporting bullying the key principles we ensure that:

- all incidents reported to relevant class teachers are recorded and parents/carers are informed
- Governors receive regular updates and reports
- Where minor incidents have been dealt with by adults who witnessed them, the pupils involved are observed to ensure that the behaviour is not repeated
- Serious or repeated incidents – and any which involve discriminatory language or behaviour – are formally followed up with the children or young people involved.

Pupil reporting

Once pupils have reported an incident, they are reassured that they have done the right thing, that the school will investigate further, take action to prevent bullying, and that they will be kept informed of what is being done as far as is appropriate.

Fear of bullying as well as bullying itself can have a significant impact on individuals, so we make every effort to determine how safe all groups of pupils feel at school. We make sure staff are aware of their responsibilities regarding this, and checking that pupils

understand that all bullying will be treated in the same way.

The process:

1. When an incident is reported or witnessed an investigation is carried out by the appropriate member of staff e.g. class teacher, deputy or Head Teacher, who will undertake to establish the nature, roles and seriousness of the incidents and those involved. Staff will determine to what extent the behaviour meets the definition of bullying described at the start of this policy.

If hurtful behaviour has occurred but the definition of bullying/racist incident has not been satisfied the school may take the following action:

- record it
 - Provide support to those involved
- Inform parents/carers of the pupils involved in the allegation
- Decide if any sanction needs to be applied in accordance with the school's behaviour policy
- Provide extra learning and skill practice opportunities if needed
- Engage and inform external agencies if necessary

If the school determines that there is evidence of bullying/racist behaviour the school will take the following action:

- record it
- Provide support to those involved
- Inform parents/carers of those involved, ensure at each stage they understand the action that the school will be taking
- Decide if any sanction needs to be applied in accordance with the school's behaviour policy
- Provide extra learning and skill practice opportunities if needed
- Engage and inform external agencies if necessary e.g. the local authority about serious incidents
- Consider the appropriateness of informing the police

Reporting serious incidents

Where there are serious bullying and racist incidents schools are advised to contact the relevant Local Authority adviser, who will offer additional support as appropriate to each situation. Such incidents should be recorded in the usual way.

Aspects of the bullying/racist incidents that would suggest serious concern may include:

- serious physical violence, e.g. needing medical attention, use of weapons
- orchestrated bullying and harassment
- repeated victim (a number of significant repeat experiences as a victim)
- extremist group activity in school, e.g. distribution of literature and incitement to hate
- extended absence related to bullying/racist incidents
- media reports of bullying/racist incidents in the school

- risk of/attempted suicide/self-harm or other behaviour likely to suggest severe vulnerability
- heightened parental concerns that bullying/racist incident(s) remain unresolved despite school action
- formal complaints related to bullying or racist incidents.

5. Stakeholder involvement

At St Meryl School we want to involve all members of our school community in our work to prevent and deal with bullying and in the review of this policy. Parents are key stakeholders in the process of challenging bullying, preventing repeated hurtful behaviour and supporting pupils who have been involved in bullying. We provide opportunities to contribute any opinions, information and feedback that might help improve the school's anti-bullying work through on-going dialogue, parent consultation evenings, school council work, staff meetings, surveys, focus groups and use of curriculum opportunities.

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Governing Body of St Meryl School in October 2014, September 2015, September 2016, September 2017, September 2018, May 2021, September 2023 and September 2025

