Medina House School Anti Bullying Policy

Introduction

At Medina House School, staff, parents and children work together to create a positive, caring, learning environment.

All children and members of staff have an absolute right to be educated and to educate in a safe and secure environment and to be protected from others who may wish to harm, degrade or abuse.

The impact on the mental health and emotional well being of a victim of bullying can be profound. It can be of short- term duration or have serious negative consequences on future opportunities in life. Therefore bullying of any kind including those related to race/gender/disability will **not** be tolerated at Medina House School.

This policy also relates to our child protection, equality, e-safety and safeguarding policies

We believe that it is everyone's responsibility to prevent occurrences of bullying and that all members of staff and pupils should feel confident and secure in the knowledge that any incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Effective management of bullying is a shared responsibility and strategies should involve school staff, parents and pupils where appropriate.

This policy applies only to incidents of bullying which take place on school premises; however the school has an interest in the welfare and conduct of its pupils and will respond to any information it receives about bullying outside school.

The focus of this policy is on anti-bullying procedures and strategies related to the pupils.

Aims
  • To create and maintain an environment in which pupils and staff feel safe and secure
  • To create and maintain an environment in which there is a zero tolerance attitude towards bullying behaviour
  • To support pupils in developing appropriate responses to others, helped by staff who treat one another with courtesy and respect, thereby modelling appropriate behaviour.

Objectives
  • Be proactive in the prevention of bullying within the curriculum e.g. PSHE and schemes of work
  • To create school rules with school council in which anti-bullying behaviour is promoted
  • To ensure anti bullying messages are conveyed in an accessible way to pupils e.g. via symbolized posters and within assemblies
  • To monitor the effectiveness of strategies for bringing bullying behaviour under control
  • Accurately record all incidents of bullying and the actions taken.
  • To demonstrate to bullies that their behaviour is unacceptable and reassure victims that action will be taken to keep them safe.
  • To address problematic behaviours and provide the 'bullies' with strategies and support to change them.

Definition of bullying

Bullying can be described as deliberate, hurtful behaviour, typically repeated over a period of time, to cause distress, solely in order to give a feeling of power, status or other gratification to the perpetrator.

A pupil's concept of bullying varies with age and conceptual development. In its simplest form, bullying is any incident perceived by the victim or any one else as intentionally hurtful, verbally, physically or indirectly. However, how it is recorded and dealt with will differ depending on the pupil's stage of development and understanding.

As some pupils grow older and develop, their views become more detailed and specific and bullying occurs as a one off incident or more usually is an on going situation, occurring when an individual or group intentionally abuse their power and take pleasure in causing physical hurt and emotional distress to someone less powerful.

Types of bullying

There are 3 main types of bullying:
- Physical: hitting, kicking, theft
- Verbal: name calling, racist, sexist, homophobic remarks
- Indirect: rumours, shunning, rejecting

Range of bullying

Bullying can range from ostracising, name-calling, teasing, threats and extortion, through to physical assault on persons and/or their property. It can be an unresolved single frightening incident which casts a shadow over a pupil's life, or a series of such incidents. It is often directed at individuals or groups who are perceived to be different:

- individuals who are less able than the bully or otherwise vulnerable
- members of a particular ethnic group, religion, social class or socio-economic group
- individuals who have disability or special education needs
- individual members of a particular gender
- individuals who are perceived to be transgender, bisexual, homosexual

The bullying is targeted at this difference with the intention to denigrate, hurt or embarrass the victim.

Methods of bullying

This policy also applies to the less traditional methods of bullying such as racist or homophobic motivated bullying and cyber-bullying which can affect both pupils and adults in school and takes the distress in to the home and the child or young person's refuges; for example the home and bedroom. (Appendix 1)

Incidents of bullying with racist or homophobic content or motivation should be recorded (Appendix 1)

Cyber-bullying

With new technologies being made increasingly available to children and young people, there is the potential for them to become a victim to online bullying (see E-safety policies)

Online bullying, cyber-bullying or e-bullying is defined as:

'the use of information and communication technologies such as email, (mobile) phone and text messages, defamatory personal websites and defamatory personal polling websites, to support deliberate, repeated, aggressive behaviour by an individual or a group, that is intended to harm others'
Bill Belsy

Children and young people are keen adopters of new technologies, but this can also leave them open to the bully. An awareness of the issues and knowledge of the methods for dealing with online bullying can

help reduce the number of incidents. At Medina House symbolized guidelines are used to teach pupils to use the internet safely and to encourage them to tell an adult if they become victims.
See our E-Safety and Child Protection Policy

Bullying and Pupils at Medina House School

At Medina House School we take into account the needs of some of our pupils for whom the concept of bullying does not exist. Some pupils have poorly developed reasoning and problem solving abilities affecting their understanding of cause and effect. They may express their anger and frustration in an inappropriate physical or verbal manner. The inability to empathise with others, and difficulties interpreting another's tone of voice, or body language, may also lead to adverse reactions which can be perceived as bullying behaviour. Such behaviour will be dealt with via behaviour plans, emotional literacy and social skills programmes.

Some pupils may target a weaker pupil because of the impact on adults i.e. gaining attention. While these actions may not follow the formal definition of bullying, they could lead to bullying and may be distressing for the victim or pupil who is targeted and should be dealt with. We will not ignore aggressive physical or verbal behaviour towards a victim.

Many of our pupils do not have the levels of social confidence and competence, and the robust friendship bonds that can protect against bullying; therefore there is a whole school responsibility to ensure that: ongoing teaching and learning takes place using the Personal, Social, Health Education and Citizenship (PSHE&C), SEAL curriculum and ELSA framework documents; and, that behaviour support plans reflect strategies to address emotionally hurtful or aggressive behaviour.

It is important to differentiate bullying from other forms of misbehaviour, as it is very easy to label any incident as bullying. Each single incident needs to be assessed by the classroom staff in relation to the definition of bullying, the perpetrator's stage of development and understanding, the effect upon the victim and the frequency of any similar behaviour.

Members of staff must not ignore any incidents where one pupil is verbally or physically abused, as the 'victim' will be feeling hurt and upset; but the more appropriate way forward may be to refer to the Behaviour Policy, behaviour managers and functional analysis of behaviour in order to implement a behaviour support plan and strategies at an appropriate level for individual pupils, rather than completing 'Bullying Incident Forms'.

We recognise that bullying behaviour is a problem for bully and victim and should be addressed in positive and constructive ways which provide opportunities for growth and development for both. The way members of staff deal with incidents of aggression should take into account all-round needs.

If classroom staff considers incidents to be bullying, then they must follow the procedures identified in this policy.

If an incident is not deemed to be bullying, it must be dealt with by following the pupil's behaviour support plan, or by informing the behaviour manager who will call a behaviour support meeting to discuss the issues and plan a way forward.

Prevention of bullying

All staff involved in the education and/or supervision of pupils will be made aware of signs of bullying and the need to apply the school's policy when episodes of bullying are witnessed or reported. All of these preventative strategies operate within a school ethos founded on equality, fairness and respect for others in which individual differences are celebrated and seen as a source of enrichment. Staff will constantly reinforce the message that bullying is unacceptable and will take positive action to prevent and control by:

- promoting friendships;
- presenting positive images of play interaction and friends;
- ensuring that pupils are supervised at all appropriate times;
- ensuring that all members of staff adhere to our Code of Conduct, our Equality and Diversity Policy, and our Whole School Behaviour Policy;
- developing procedures that safeguard pupils in the event of bullying;
- following up all instances of aggressive and inappropriate behaviour;
- watching for early signs of distress and observing, listening to what the pupils are indicating either verbally or through changes in behaviour: *listen, believe, act*;
- ensuring that appreciation and respect for all cultures are promoted;
- helping pupils to develop strategies for the management of their behaviour resulting in positive assertive attitudes towards others and improving self esteem;
- encouraging pupils where appropriate to reflect on issues involving friendship and bullying throughout the weekly timetable, e.g. draw pictures/write stories;
- encouraging pupils where appropriate to listen to and read stories about friendship and bullying, with discussion afterwards to raise their awareness of the concept of bullying and positive image of friendship;
- using PSHE&C, SEAL schemes, Childline Teachers' Pack, friendships and similar resources to support individual targets.
- discussing, when appropriate, issues related to racism, homophobia and bullying;
- using whole school occasions; for example assemblies, class room activities such as PSHE&C or SEAL topics and theme days which encourage an understanding of diversity
- at individual level with pupils who have been victims or bullies;
- using role playing situations with follow up discussions about bullying.

Parental involvement

Medina House recognises the important part parents play in supporting their children and promoting change. We welcome the active involvement of parents of both victim and bully in bringing any issues under control. Parents will be kept informed of any concerns the School has in relation to this issue.

Procedures and Consequences

The emphasis is always on a caring, understanding approach as bullies are often victims. However, this does not imply that they should bully, and a clear message must be given that bullying is unacceptable.

- Pupils should be listened to, they must have confidence in adults to report all bullying incidents. There should be time given to discuss the incident with the pupil who feels upset.
- The bullying behaviour and threats of bullying must be seen to be dealt with immediately i.e. the bully to be removed from the group, where appropriate, the bully to offer an apology, and/or do something for the victim.
- Discussions with the pupil to take place immediately following an incident or when the pupil is calm enough to reflect on actions. Confront them with the details and ask them to tell about the situation/incident. Make it clear that bullying will not be tolerated.
- The bully is expected to record the incident i.e. write, draw or use role play. Use role reversal where the bully becomes the bullied.
- Cases of serious or persistent bullying may lead to temporary or permanent exclusion. (see Behaviour Policy).
- The adult records the incident on an incident report sheet (Appendix 1).
- Action is taken and results reported to the Headteacher.

- The parents of the pupils involved, are informed and, where appropriate, asked to come to a meeting to discuss the problem where they are shown copies of the reports. There should be separate discussions with parents of the bully and the victim.
- Help to be given to the bully to change behaviour e.g. 'special time' to develop play and communication skills, individual PSHE targets and targeted SEAL work on an individual basis
- Whenever possible the adult should mediate between the victim and bully encouraging reconciliation, without expecting a token 'apology'.
- Where appropriate, victims and bullies should be offered peer mentors,
- Following any incident that may indicate that evidence of indecent images or offences concerning child abuse is contained on school computers, the matter will be referred at the earliest opportunity to the police.

Monitoring incidents and overview of the forms

The Headteacher must be informed about any bullying incident. In the case of injury an Accident form should also be completed.

The classroom staff complete relevant forms and these are passed to the Headteacher.

Frequency and intensity of incidents will be recorded and kept in a log and be regularly monitored in order to ensure strategies are successful and to prevent any escalation of incidents.

Equal opportunities

Diversity of cultures and sexual orientation are represented in the books, display materials and equipment used within the school. Activities are organised to give pupils the opportunity to share in, respect and appreciate a wide range of cultures and activities. Each pupil's culture and sexual orientation is recognised and treated with respect across the curriculum and pupils are given the opportunity to share experiences and knowledge in order to raise self esteem.

Resources

It is important to invest time and resources in the prevention and management of bullying and staff require training and support to manage it with confidence within their specialist field.

Each term, some aspect of anti-bullying activities should be built into the broad and balanced programmes at both semi and formal levels and included at a whole school level; for example, assemblies, in-class activities, and at an individual level.

Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning provide resources to support emotional and social development and include activities based around friends, relationships and bullying.

Staff and Bullying

If any member of staff feels that either they are being bullied by a colleague or that a colleague is acting in a manner that could be perceived as bullying towards a pupil, they must report it to the Headteacher immediately.   (see whistle blowing and allegations of abuse against staff policies).

Date Agreed: ……………………………….

Signed : ……………………………………………………   **Signed :** …………………………………………….
           Chair of Governors   **Headteacher**

Date to be reviewed: November 2017

Medina House School
Bullying Incident Form

Incident No:

Nature of Alleged Bullying: (Please circle)

Homophobic   Racial   Disability   Sexual Orientation   Cyber

Verbal Aggression   Physical Aggression

Date and Time of Incident

Perpetrator(s) (Please circle)

Pupil(s)   Member of the public   Member of MHS Staff   Other

Victim(s) (Please Circle)

Pupil/Pupils   Member of the public   Member of MHS Staff   Other

Incident reported by: Name: ……………………………………………………….

Signature: ………………………………..   Date: ………………………………

Person completing this form: Name: …………………………………………………

Signature: ………………………………..   Date: ………………………………

Brief Description of Incident

Action Taken At the Time

Further Action to be taken (including time frame)

Headteacher's Signature: ………………………………………………….

Date : ……................