



# **MARSH HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

**Date approved by Governors: 5<sup>th</sup> February 2025**  
**Review Date: February 2026**  
**Signed by Head Teacher and Chair of Governors via Governor Hub**

## **Mission**

To provide a caring, respectful, tolerant environment in which all individuals are enabled to fulfil their full potential through a creative and enjoyable curriculum.

## **Principles and Values**

As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported. The school fosters high expectations and we will challenge any behaviour that falls below this.

At Marsh Hill Primary School bullying will not be tolerated. As a school team we ensure that children are taught ways to stand up to verbal and physical threats and to feel that their thoughts and feelings are valued. In conjunction with SMSC and Values Anti-Bullying is a key teaching theme across the school year. The school will seek ways to counter the effects of bullying that may occur within school or in the local community.

## **Legal framework:**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Education Act 2011
- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'
- DCMS, DSIT, and UK Council for Internet Safety (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Positive Behaviour Policy

- Safeguarding Policy
- Personal, Social, Health and Economics Education Policy

### **Statutory requirements:**

The school understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The school understands that, under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, it could have charges brought against it if it allows the rights of pupils to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously. The headteacher will ensure that this policy complies with the HRA; the headteacher understands that they cannot do this without fully involving their teaching staff.

Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or in a way which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or contains information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.
- Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to the police include violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation, and hate crimes.

### **Objectives of this Policy is to ensure that:**

- Teaching staff, support staff, pupils, parents, and governors have an understanding of what bullying is.
- Parents, pupils and school staff know what to do if they feel there is incidents of bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying and what they should do if they believe a bullying situation has arisen.

We must remember that however we feel that we have an open door policy and we create a safe environment for our children Bullying does occur and it can happen here.

The aim of this policy is to work together to ensure that school is a safe place for children and adults to be, whether the school community is directly or indirectly affected by bullying or not.

### **What Is Bullying?**

Bullying is defined as: The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or through cyber space.

Bullying can be:-

Emotional - unfriendly acts, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding equipment, stealing and/or threatening gestures)

Physical - Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence

Racial - taunts, gestures regarding culture and religion

Sexist or sexual bullying including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic comments and issue of sexuality, and sexist attitudes.

Cyber bullying - All areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse, mobile threats, messaging & calls, camera, iPad, games consoles.

Bullying may be related to:

- Race / comments regarding country of origin
- Religion
- Culture
- SEN or disability
- Appearance or health condition
- Home circumstances
- Sexual orientation, sexism, or sexual bullying

We must recognise that bullying can take place in the classroom, playground, toilets, on the journey to and from school, on school trips and with increasing frequency via the internet. Children can be victims of bullying behaviour outside of the school community including within their immediate family and beyond.

Children displaying bullying behaviour and Targets

**Bullying takes place where there is an imbalance of power from a bully over a target.**

This can be achieved by:

- An individual who feels they have the power due to size, strength and age,
- The numbers or group size involved
- Anonymity – through the use of cyber bullying or using email, social networking sites, texts etc.

**At Marsh Hill Primary School all staff:** must remain vigilant about bullying and approach this in the same way as any other category of Child Protection. Raise concerns with DSL or a member of SLT, report the incident on IRIS as a verbal or physical incident.

It is important that all staff are aware that as with all child protection concerns that they support the child throughout the situation.

Children may not be aware that they are being bullied; they may be too young or have Special Educational Needs.

Staff should be able to identify children who may be vulnerable and who could be identified as a target to bullying as well as those who may demonstrate bullying behaviour.

Children should be encouraged to talk to and involve the Anti Bullying Ambassadors to help them report incidents of bullying behaviour.

### **Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a target of bullying. Bullying has the potential to damage the mental health of the target. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

### **Signs and Symptoms**

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

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go to school
- begs to be driven to school (typically in Year 5 and 6)
- changes their usual behaviour
- is unwilling to attend school
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- often reports money as "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- is demonstrating bullying behaviour towards other children or siblings
- is frightened to say what's wrong

- lack of eye contact
- change in attitude to people at home.

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

### **Outcomes**

1. All known/reported incidences of bullying will be investigated by a member of SLT, Inclusion/Pastoral Team
2. Discussion about the bullying and how we are dealing with it will be discussed sensitively with the target and their parents.
3. The parents of the child displaying bullying behaviour will be invited into school to discuss the support we will be putting in place to ensure that incidents are stopped.
4. Support to put the situation right will be instigated.
5. In some cases, outside agencies may be requested to support the school or family in dealing with bullying e.g. BSS, MASH, Forward Thinking Birmingham.
6. In serious cases, fixed term or permanent exclusion will be considered.
7. If possible, the pupils will be reconciled.
8. All incidents of potential incidents of bullying will be recorded on IRIS. These will be recorded as verbal or physical assaults on peers so that a picture/paper trail can be identified.
9. After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be recorded in the Bullying Log and monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

### **Prevention**

At Marsh Hill Primary we use a variety of methods for helping children to prevent bullying through whole school assemblies, Anti Bullying workshops and activities delivered by the Pastoral Manager, SMSC, IPC Curriculum, Values Education, E-Safety Leaflets, Workshops by theatre groups, Internet Safety Day. We also deliver regular workshops from the Community Police.

The working philosophy of Marsh Hill Primary School means that all staff actively encourage children to have respect for each other and for other people's property.

Staff will regularly discuss bullying; this will inform children that we are serious about dealing with the problem and leads to open conversations and increased confidence in children to want to discuss the subject.

Parental Involvement:

At Marsh Hill we have an open-door policy so that if a parent feels that their child is being bullied that they know who to talk to.

We encourage all parents to discuss any concerns initially with the class teacher or the Phase Leader we also have an Inclusion Leader and a Pastoral Manager who are available to discuss concerns. If parents feel that they need more support any member of SLT will be available to listen and develop a line of enquiry. At all levels the parents and the target will be fully supported and involved.

We ask parents to **allow**:

- the threats of bullying to be investigated in order to stop the bullying behaviour quickly
- us to help the pupils who have been identified as displaying bullying behaviour change their behaviour.

We expect parents to **not**:

- Attempt to sort the problem out themselves by speaking to the child whom they think may be the bully or by speaking to their parents.
- Encourage your child to be 'a bully' back.

Both of these will only make the problem much harder to solve.

Support for the Target:

- Once the behaviour is identified as bullying the incident should be reported to a DSL or member of the Inclusion/Pastoral Team.
- The target and the pupil who has displayed bullying behaviour should be interviewed separately.
- The target's story should be listened to and the pupil reassured that he/she has done the right thing by reporting the situation. Targets of bullying often feel powerless and vulnerable. They may end up believing that they deserve to be bullied. Everything should be done to re-establish the target's self-esteem and self-confidence.
- The pupil displaying bullying behaviour should be spoken to and the reasons why he/she has bullied should be identified. The pupil should be helped to recognise his/her unsociable behaviour and given support and counselling from the Pastoral Team to address that behaviour.
- On some occasions it may be possible to develop a Circle of Friends so that with support the target and the pupil who caused them distress can sit down together to discuss their feelings and the reasons why the situation has developed. The problem could then be resolved amicably and/or a compromise reached.
- On all occasions the pupil who displayed bullying behaviour should be told firmly to stop the anti-social behaviour immediately and to stay away from the target.
- In all instances, the parents of both parties should be contacted and informed of the situation and the action taken. If appropriate, they will be invited into the school to discuss the matter.
- Follow up meetings with the target should be arranged to find out whether the solution has been effective or not, and the situation should be monitored.

Serious or prolonged bullying could result in one or more of the following sanctions:

- temporary removal from the class
- interview with the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher
- writing an explanation or apology for the incident
- withdrawal of break or lunchtime recreation and placed in reflection
- withholding participation in school trips or sports events that are not an essential part of the curriculum
- fixed term exclusion
- permanent exclusion

A written record should be made of every incident of verbal or physical abuse and should be recorded on an IRIS Incident Form. The report should indicate who was involved, where and when the incident occurred, what happened, what action was taken, whether the parents were informed and how the incident was followed up. The Pastoral Manager and the Inclusion Lead will look regularly at this behaviour and create a line of enquiry to prevent any incidents of bullying from starting.

### **Recording of Bullying Incidents**

When an incident of bullying has taken place, staff must be prepared to record and report each incident on IRIS.

In the case of racist incidents, this must be reported to the Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher or the Pastoral Manager. General incidences of verbal and physical attacks on pupils must be recorded on IRIS.

All incidents of bullying will be discussed with all relevant staff and parents of the children involved, in order that everyone can be vigilant and that bullying may be prevented from happening in the future.

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### **Review, Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy will be kept under review by the school's senior leadership team.

This policy is a working document and therefore is open to change and restructuring as and when the need arises. This policy will be reviewed annually and consideration given to the implications for future whole school development planning.