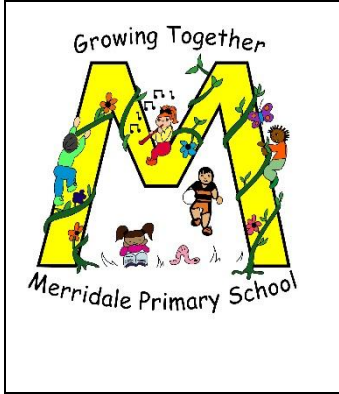




Merridale Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy reviewed by Governors: January 2026

Date for next review: January 2028

The aim of the anti-bullying policy is to ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will pupils be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at schools.

What is bullying?

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.

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school. Pupils must be encouraged to report bullying in schools.

All school staff must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with school policy. Staff would be reminded to be vigilant and recognise that bullying can often be subtle and sophisticated with individuals using other children to sometimes to carry out inappropriate behaviours to bully other children indirectly.

Merridale Primary's response to bullying does not start at the point at which a child has been bullied. Our approach is one in which school staff proactively gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. This might involve talking to pupils about issues of difference, perhaps in lessons, through dedicated events or projects, or through assemblies. Staff themselves will be able to determine what will work best for their pupils, depending on the particular issues they need to address.

We aim to create an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave.

Values of respect for staff and other pupils, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment and are reinforced by staff and older pupils who set a good example to the rest. We encourage parents and carers to adopt this ethos at home and also when dealing directly with school staff.

Intervention

School will apply disciplinary measures to pupils who bully in order to show clearly that their behaviour is wrong. Disciplinary measures will be applied fairly, consistently, and reasonably taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that the pupils may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils. It is also important to consider the motivations behind bullying behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case, the child engaging in bullying may need support themselves.

We will:

- **make it easy** for pupils to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on. Pupils should feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred outside school including cyber/online bullying;
- **involve parents** to ensure that they understand that the school does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied. Parents must feel confident that the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and trust that the school will resolve the issue in a way that protects the child. Parents must also reinforce the value of good behaviour at home;
- **involve pupils.** All pupils understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders;
- **regularly evaluate** and update their approach to take account of developments in technology, for instance updating 'acceptable use' policies for computers;
- **implement disciplinary sanctions.** The consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable;
- **openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying,** such as religion, ethnicity, disability or gender. Also children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities. Schools can also teach children that using any prejudice-based language is unacceptable;

- **use specific organisations or resources for help with particular problems.** Schools can draw on the experience and expertise of anti-bullying organisations with a proven track record and / or specialised expertise in dealing with certain forms of bullying;
- **provide effective staff training.** Anti-bullying policies are most effective when all school staff understand the principles and purpose of the school's policy, its legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems, and where to seek support. Schools can invest in specialised skills to help their staff understand the needs of their pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and/or disability (SEND).
- **work with the wider community** such as the police and children's services where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and where a criminal offence may have been committed. School will also work with other agencies and the wider community to tackle bullying that is happening outside school;
- **create an inclusive environment.** Schools should create a safe environment where pupils can openly discuss the cause of their bullying, without fear of further bullying or discrimination; and
- **celebrate success.** Celebrating success is an important way of creating a positive school ethos around the issue.

What does the law say?

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

There are a number of statutory obligations on schools with regard to behaviour which establish clear responsibilities to respond to bullying. In particular section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006:

- provides that every school must have measures to encourage good behaviour and **prevent all forms of bullying** amongst pupils. These measures should be part of the school's behaviour policy which must be communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents;
- gives head teachers the ability to discipline pupils for poor behaviour that occurs even when the pupil is not on school premises or under the lawful control of school staff.

The Equality Act 2010

Requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, 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; and

- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Bullying outside school premises

Head teachers have a specific statutory power to discipline pupils for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives head teachers the power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in the city centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The head teacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

Implementation

School

The following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents of bullying:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached
- A clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the head teacher
- The head teacher will interview all concerned and will record the incident
- Teachers will be kept informed and if bullying persists will advise other teaching and support staff
- Parents will be kept informed
- Punitive measures will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned

Pupils

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a teacher or member of staff of their choice

- reassuring the pupil
- offering continuous support
- restoring self-esteem and confidence

Pupils who have bullied will be helped by:

- discussing what happened
- discovering why the pupil became involved
- establishing the wrong-doing and need to change informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude of the pupil

The following disciplinary steps can be taken:

- official warnings to cease offending
- supervised detention during the school day
- exclusion from certain aspects of school life
- temporary (fixed-term) suspension
- permanent exclusion

Within the curriculum the school will raise the awareness of bullying through RHE, Annual Anti-Bullying Week, assemblies and subject areas, as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

The school will review this policy bi-annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.