



## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

***This Policy applies to the entire setting including the EYFS.***

**Staff Responsible for policy review: Head, Deputy Head (Head of Pastoral)**

**Next Review: 1<sup>st</sup> November 2024**

<b>Last Review</b>	<b>Updates made</b>
Sept 2023	Investigating bullying incidents – Following Anti Bullying Alliance guidelines and using their suggested language

The Mead is committed to fostering a spirit of mutual trust between pupils and staff and to creating and sustaining a friendly, supportive, safe and structured environment in which pupils develop confidence and self-esteem and in which they show consideration for the dignity of others.

Bullying is a whole school issue and we regard all incidences of bullying equally seriously and in turn expect all staff, pupils and parents to play their part in preventing and tackling bullying.

The Mead Anti-Bullying Policy incorporates the DfE advice on “Preventing and Tackling Bullying” (July 2017) and incorporates The Equality Act 2010.

The Mead recognises that bullying is wholly unacceptable in any form whether physical, emotional, verbal, or in the form of cyberbullying. All forms of racial, religious, cultural, sexual, sexist, homophobic and cyber bullying are included in this as well as any bullying directed at any person with a protected characteristic.

Anyone with concerns is advised to come forward to speak to a member of staff, which will usually be the child’s Form Tutor in the first instance. All such concerns will be taken most seriously and will be investigated immediately. The Mead recognises the seriousness of any behaviour which is threatening or harassing, particularly in causing physical and/or emotional harm, and will always seek to protect its pupils and staff robustly from such behaviour.

The School recognises its responsibilities in promoting an anti-bullying culture and aims to:

- Demonstrate that bullying will not be tolerated;
- Take measures to prevent all forms of bullying in the School and during off-site activities;
- Support everyone in identifying and protecting those who might be bullied;
- Demonstrate to all that the safety and happiness of pupils is enhanced by dealing positively with bullying; and
- Encourage pupils to tell someone if they or others are being bullied.

To achieve these aims all staff are issued with detailed information about procedures, and pupils informed of the following principles:

- Bullying is unacceptable.
- Every member of the School can expect to be treated with respect, dignity and tolerance irrespective of their religious beliefs, sexuality, ethnic background, aptitude or disability.
- Pupils are expected to treat others as they would wish to be treated themselves.
- Members of the School community have both an individual and collective obligation to report any incident of bullying whenever or wherever it might occur, and have a right to expect that appropriate action will be taken to prevent its repetition.
- Those who bully should be aware that action will always be taken, though this may include help and guidance.
- Victims will be entitled to appropriate counselling and support.

## Aims and Objectives

It is the responsibility of the whole community, pupils and adults alike, to uphold the values of integrity, morality and concern for others. All members of our community have the right to remain free from bullying or the fear of bullying. All members should feel free to be able to report any concerns related to bullying in the certain knowledge that those concerns will be listened to and the matter investigated by those competent to do so. Those who report an incident of bullying or suspected bullying will be able to do so in safety. The Mead does not tolerate bullying.

## Definition of Bullying & Cyberbullying

The DfE defines **bullying** as:

*'Behaviour by an individual or group, usually **repeated** over time, that **intentionally hurts** another individual or group either **physically** or **emotionally**.'*

Bullying can be extremely serious. It can be physical or emotional (which can cause psychological damage).

Bullying is the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person, or group of persons, by physical (including sexual), verbal, and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can also involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle but it can also be overt and intimidatory.

Bullying can also include **cyberbullying**: "*Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support **deliberate, repeated, and hostile** behaviour by an individual or group that is **intended to harm others**" [www.cyberbullying.org](http://www.cyberbullying.org). Cyberbullying can involve email, text messages and social media sites such as but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat, emails and mobile devices used for text messages and for recording audio, photographs and video.*

Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve anyone - pupils, other young people, staff and parents.

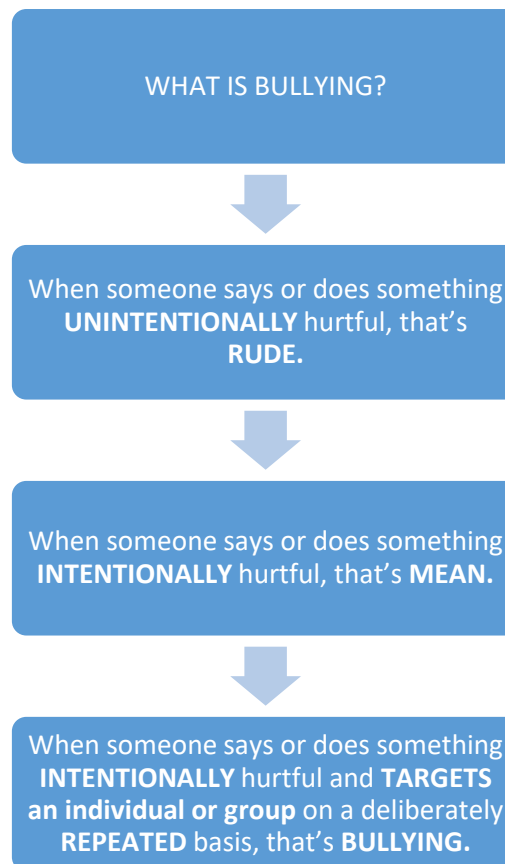
As a result of these definitions, the school makes the following clear statements:

- The school has a **zero tolerance** approach to bullying.
- The school categorises bullying as a form of physical and/or emotional abuse.
- All staff treat bullying incidents as seriously as any other safeguarding matter.
- All types and symptoms of emotional and physical (including sexual) abuse should be considered as possible in relation to peer to peer abuse/bullying.
- The school is committed to reaching a full and lasting resolution to any bullying incident or accusation.

Given the school's position, there is no need to list all types and symptoms of physical and emotional abuse in this policy and staff (and parents) should refer to the Safeguarding Policy. In summary, however, bullying typically includes derogatory remarks, deliberate isolation or violent conduct. It can be on the grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational need and disability or because the child is adopted or is a carer, it may occur directly or through cyber-technology.

## 1. What is the threshold for bullying?

All children and adults at The Mead are taught, via guidance and discussion, the threshold for bullying using the following flowchart (which is displayed in every classroom):



Through termly (as a minimum frequency) assemblies, stories, literature, projects and PSHEE lessons, all children are taught the meaning of this flowchart. Through numerous methods, the words 'intentional' and 'unintentional' are discussed and explained as is the decision to continue to act intentionally hurtful after the first incident rather than to act with remorse and reconciliation.

## 2. Preventing Bullying

The school aims for no bullying to occur but always maintains an 'it could happen here' mentality. Therefore, we put the following measures in place to ensure that bullying does not become a problem:

- our one school rule: **Be kind, listen and do your best** gives a clear benchmark for behaviour and this is referred to constantly in school;
- positive behaviour is reinforced throughout the school day and celebrated each week in the Friday Celebration Assembly;
- through our PSHEE curriculum, pupils are aware of their social and moral responsibilities as part of a community as well as addressing bullying directly to give an opportunity to discuss the definition of bullying and appropriate strategies to deal with it;

- other lessons, particularly RE, English, Drama, and assemblies highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce the message that bullying is unacceptable by teaching moral and spiritual values and social skills;
- The Mead uses national campaigns to raise awareness eg: Anti-Bullying Week and Wellbeing Day;
- a culture of speaking up and speaking out is nurtured so that children know that all reported incidents will be taken seriously, discussed and investigated – pupils are encouraged to report any incidents that concern them;
- all staff are required to read and understand the school’s Anti-Bullying Policy and procedures are regularly discussed and reviewed in staff meetings and in our weekly pastoral staff meeting; and
- reported incidents are discussed, recorded and investigated at once. Situations are carefully monitored. Records of any proven incidents are logged in order for lessons to be learned and patterns of behaviour identified and monitored.

### **Staff Action on ‘rude’ or ‘mean’ behaviour**

All staff know to **always** act on rude or mean behaviour in line with the school’s Behaviour Policy. We have high expectations for behaviour in our school and consider all incidents to have a teaching element to help children know how to make better choices and understand the emotions and consequences of their actions. Staff will always take time to listen to a child who claims to have been hurt by another and not dismiss their concerns.

### **Child Action on ‘rude’ or ‘mean’ behaviour**

All children are encouraged to take responsibility for highlighting rude or mean behaviour. Children are encouraged to express their feelings with their words (never to react physically) and to explain to the other child that their rude or mean behaviour has caused them hurt and upset. All children know (through regular verbal reminders and the posters throughout the school) that they can and should speak to someone like another pupil (particularly a Year 6), the Deputy Head (Head of Pastoral), a Form Tutor, the Head or Mitzi (the school dog) if they have been hurt or upset and/or a family member or external agency (NSPCC/Childline) if appropriate. By asking children to take responsibility for expressing their feelings and confronting those who have acted in a hurtful way towards them we aim to empower them to deal with conflict at an early stage and thereby prevent bullying.

### **Organisation and Vigilance**

Whilst aiming to give children enough freedom to disagree, problem solve and resolve conflict, we also aim to reduce the likelihood of major incidents by being both organised and vigilant. We organise class lists to maximise positive peer relationships, duty rotas to maximise effective supervision and seating plans/team selections to minimise negative fallout. Equally, whilst on duty and around the school, the teaching staff are constantly committed to being vigilant for behaviour that needs intervention or guidance.

### **Online Safety**

A detailed Online Safety Policy sets out the acceptable use of the internet:

- Children are not allowed to bring any device into school except for agreed purposes or a phone in Year 6 if they walk home from school (phones are safely held in the school office during the school day);

- The school's network blocks all websites which could be used to pass abusive messages between children;
- Staff know not to share passwords with children and to never have their own personal mobile phone visible in any area where children could be present;
- Online safety forms a part of our curriculum and children are well coached regarding their online behaviour.
- Children know that online behaviour will be treated in exactly the same way as behaviour in 'the real world' and that the School's power to deal with bullying incidents extends beyond the school gates.

### **3. Dealing with bullying (including online/off-site)**

The clarity and repetition of the message of 'talking to someone' creates a culture where the reporting of bullying (by the victim or someone else) is highly likely. Children and parents know it is their responsibility to report concerns or allegations to a member of staff immediately whether it be on or off the school premises. Staff know that they should treat and act upon any concerns/ allegations of bullying in accordance with this policy.

The ideal outcome is always **to ensure that the bullying stops immediately and does not reoccur**. Therefore, although sanctions may often be needed, we do not enter an investigation with the intention to 'punish' the bully as this might often be to the detriment of the ideal outcome listed above. Unless the Deputy Head (Head of Pastoral) and the teachers involved decide a more bespoke approach is needed We follow the procedure below when investigating most bullying incidents;

1. Staff to ensure that all children are safe as soon as a disclosure is made, by parent or pupil.
2. Most appropriate member of staff (usually Deputy Head (Head of Pastoral) to interview the target and record exact details of their account and reassure the target that the school take the situation seriously and will act.
3. Any and all appropriate witnesses will be interviewed with accurate notes taken. Witnesses may not be interviewed if their knowledge of the investigation may be to the detriment of the ideal outcome. Witnesses can include all children irrespective of their role, 'Reinforcer', 'Assistant', 'Defender' or 'Outsider'
4. School will use this information to take action to try to stop the situation happening again by;
  - a) Being clear the behaviour is not ok to all children involved, including witnesses (in any role).
  - b) Look at the whole group behaviour – could anyone become an upstander? Is anyone encouraging the bullying?
  - c) Keep checking in even when you think the bullying has stopped.
5. The next step is to talk to the 'Ringleader'
6. All steps recorded in the bullying log.
7. School look at what they can do to change.
  - a) What has the incident taught us? Should we update any policies? Provide further training/ learning? Address any discriminatory language?
  - b) How do we stop the situation happening to others in the future?

8. Parents of the Target and parents of the 'Ringleader' are informed. Parents of children in different roles associated with bullying may also be informed.
9. Children are given the chance to apologise, in person or a written apology. This is not always immediately after the investigation and the resolution is specific to each case.

It is then vital that Form Tutors and other staff continue to be vigilant and observe the bully and victim carefully. Positive reinforcement and management skills used to avoid the situation escalating again. If bullying reoccurs then a bespoke pathway should be set for both bully and victim with the possibility for serious sanctions being used.

The keeping of a log allows the school to evaluate the effectiveness of different approaches and to enable patterns to be identified. A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm and so recording and procedures for a safeguarding concern should be followed as detailed in the Safeguarding Policy.

**In extreme cases (the threshold of which is determined on a case by case basis by the Head), the Head reserves the right to suspend or exclude any pupil or pupils for bullying another child or group of children at the school as well as informing local children's services and potentially the Police.**