

Meadows School

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Countering Bullying Policy

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1. Introduction:

Meadows School is committed to Barnardo's Basis and Values, which provides the framework within which we can engage in giving young people a better start in life.

- We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all Students.
- We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued.
- We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.
- We understand that as a Special School we are working with some of the most vulnerable young people in the UK and therefore have a duty to ensure stringent procedures and training must be in place and available to all staff.

2. Aims:

The school aims to ensure that:

- We create an environment where young people can be supported in addressing their educational, emotional, spiritual, mental health and social needs and strive towards their full potential.
- All staff and students understand that all forms of bullying interfere with achieving this aim. Therefore, such behaviour will not be tolerated.
- The staff team will be proactive in their use of the strategies and systems in place to address bullying at all levels while providing opportunities for change for those who are bullying and those who are bullied.

3. Definitions of Bullying:

Bullying can be defined as "*behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally*". (DfE "Preventing and Tackling Bullying", July 2017)

Bullying happens when one person exerts some form of power, in a negative and/or oppressive way, over another person for their own popularity, status or material gain. It is for personal gain and is at another person's expense and sense of well-being. Bullying is an abuse of power, these may include (but are not limited to):

- Direct or indirect threats of or actual physical violence.
- Direct or indirect insults and/or offensive remarks about a person or their family.
- Direct or indirect insults and/or offensive remarks based on difference, for example, race, gender, disability or sexuality.
- Direct or indirect ridicule, sarcasm and put-downs.
- The systematic ignoring or exclusion of someone from everyday events, activities and discussion.
- The deliberate destruction of another person's property.
- Group manipulation eg: inciting others to victimise a young person.

4. Types of Bullying:

Bullying can happen to anyone. This policy covers all types and forms of bullying including:

- Bullying related to physical appearance
- Bullying of young carers, children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Bullying related to physical/mental health conditions
- Physical bullying
- Emotional bullying
- Sexual bullying/harassment
- Peer on Peer abuse
- Bullying via technology, known as online or cyberbullying
- Prejudicial bullying (against people/Students with protected characteristics):
 - Bullying related to race, religion, faith and belief and for those without faith
 - Bullying related to ethnicity, nationality or culture
 - Bullying related to Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND)
 - Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic/biphobic bullying)
 - Gender based bullying, including transphobic bullying
 - Bullying against teenage parents (pregnancy and maternity under the Equality Act)

5. Vigilance:

Staff need to use their professional judgement to decide if observed or reported behaviour constitutes bullying and act accordingly.

It is important to note that not all forms of bullying can be managed within the school. For example, cyber bullying is a big issue at weekends and we therefore need to work in close partnership with parents/carers. This school will not tolerate cyber bullying. The nature of some bullying behaviours may constitute a child protection referral and/or police involvement. For further information see Meadows [Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy & Procedure](#) and Barnardo's [Safeguarding Children Policy](#)

It is also important to recognise that bullying behaviours are not exclusive to young people. It is therefore imperative that as a staff team we remain vigilant and address any indication of bullying by colleagues through their line management system or Barnardo's [Whistleblowing Policy](#) and/or [Prevention of Harassment Policy](#)

6. Responding to Bullying:

The following steps may be taken when dealing with all incidents of bullying reported to the school:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached or witnessed the concern.
- The school will provide appropriate support for the person being bullied – making sure they are not at risk of immediate harm and will involve them in any decision- making, as appropriate.
- Staff should strive to deal with incidents of bullying at the lowest level appropriate to the severity of the incident.
- The DSL will be informed of all bullying issues where there are safeguarding concerns.
- The school will speak with and inform other staff members, where appropriate.
- The school will ensure parents/carers are kept informed about the concern and action taken, as appropriate and in line with child protection and confidentiality policies.
- Sanctions, as identified within the school behaviour policy, and support will be implemented in consultation with all parties concerned.
- If necessary, other agencies may be consulted or involved, such as the police, if a criminal offence has been committed, or other local services including early help or children’s social care, if a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm.
- Where the bullying of or by Students takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including cyberbullying), the school will ensure that the concern is fully investigated. If required, the DSL will collaborate with other schools. Appropriate action will be taken, including providing support and implementing sanctions in school in accordance with this policy and the school’s behaviour policy.
- It should be recognised that “bully” and “victim” are labels that describe behaviour and not the whole person. Bully and victim behaviour is learned and so can be unlearned.

IT IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL THAT THE YOUNG PERSON RECEIVES FEEDBACK SO THAT THEY CAN SEE THAT SOMETHING IS BEING OR HAS BEEN DONE ABOUT THEIR COMPLAINT.

7. Responding to Cyber Bullying:

Cyberbullying means deliberately using Information and Communications Technology to cause distress to another person.

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the school will:

- Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.
- Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation.
- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include:
 - looking at use of the school systems;
 - identifying and interviewing possible witnesses;
 - Contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary.
- Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation. This may include:
 - Support reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content.
 - Confiscating and searching Students' electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law - for further advice see DFE guidance on Searching, screening and confiscation at school'
 - Requesting the deletion of locally-held content and content posted online if they contravene school behavioural policies.
- Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed.
- Provide information to staff and Students regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online. This may include:
 - advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply;
 - providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists;
 - helping those involved to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain.

Environment:

The whole school community will

- Create and support an inclusive environment which promotes a culture of mutual respect, consideration and care for others, which will be upheld by all.
- Recognise that bullying can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the community, including adults and young people.
- Recognises the potential for children with SEN and disabilities to be disproportionately impacted by bullying and will implement additional pastoral support as required.
- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as:
 - children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities, religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference.
- Challenge practice and language (including 'banter') which does not uphold the school values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect towards others.
- Be encouraged to use technology, especially mobile phones and social media, positively and responsibly.
- Work with staff, the wider community and outside agencies to prevent and tackle concerns including all forms of prejudice-driven bullying.
- Actively create "safe spaces" for vulnerable children and young people.
- Celebrate success and achievements to promote and build a positive school ethos.

Policy & Support:

The whole school community will:

- Provide a range of approaches for Students, staff and parents/carers to access support and report concerns.
- Regularly update and evaluate our practice to consider the developments of technology and provide up-to-date advice and education to all members of the community regarding positive online behaviour.
- Take appropriate, proportionate and reasonable action, in line with existing school policies, for any bullying brought to the schools' attention, which involves or effects Students, even when they are not on school premises; for example, when using school transport or online, etc.
- Implement appropriate disciplinary sanctions; the consequences of bullying will reflect the seriousness of the incident, so that others see that bullying is unacceptable.
- Use a variety of techniques to resolve the issues between those who bully, and those who have been bullied.

9. Prevention of Cyber Bullying:

- All students are required to co-sign, with their parent or carer, an Acceptable Use Agreement. This covers required guidelines for their school use of ICT resources, and suggested ones for the home environment. This letter is usually signed when the Student first enters the school, and is part of the initial meeting, but during the introductory phase, the letters were sent home for this process to take place. – Appendix A
- All websites are filtered using Smoothwall, and access is restricted to ones which are considered acceptable in school. However, no web filtering system is infallible, so efforts are made to supervise Student activity, and to investigate any Student activity that does not fall within agreed limits. Software is in place that facilitates real time tracking and recording of Student activity on all school PCs.
- Mobile phones or cameras are not allowed in school, unless an agreement has been reached with a member of staff, for example, when a Student may need these as part of coursework.
- Remote Learning is facilitated through Sharepoint and Microsoft Teams which is monitored by teaching staff. The same rules will apply in this context, as if the Student is working within the school
- As with other forms of bullying, it is vital to include discussion of prejudice-driven cyberbullying, including sexist, racist and homophobic issues, as well as those related to SEN and disabilities.

10. Recording:

This is an extremely important element in effectively managing bullying behaviour. All staff hold a responsibility to ensure that recording systems are maintained. This means that monitoring systems can effectively work to protect victims of bullying and persistent bullying behaviour can be highlighted and managed.

All incidents of bullying should be recorded on CPOMS. All staff have a log in. Where possible the young people involved should be part of this process and have their views recorded. If a member of staff witnesses the incident they should be the person to record the incident.

IT IS THE DUTY OF EVERY MEMBER OF STAFF TO CHALLENGE AND REPORT ANY BULLYING THEY WITNESS.

11. Monitoring Incident:

- It is the responsibility of the person who recorded the incident to ensure that the young person has some feedback from that incident.
- Reported bullying incidents will be discussed at the schools morning briefings.
- It is the responsibility of all staff to directly monitor known issues of reported bullying as part of their working day
- The DSL and Deputy DSL's will monitor bullying issues through CPOMS

- An evaluation of the bullying data will be included in the safeguarding annual report to Governors.
- Monitoring will highlight individuals who are persistently bullying and being bullied. This will allow the staff team to incorporate work that will help individuals to change behaviours that are negative for them.

12. Supporting Students:

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Reassuring the Student and providing ongoing pastoral support.
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their teacher, the designated safeguarding lead, or a member of staff of their choice.
- Being advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience as appropriate.
- Working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- Providing ongoing support; this may include: working and speaking with staff, offering formal counselling, engaging with parents and carers.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this could include support through Early Help or Specialist Children's Services, or support through the Children and Young People's Mental Health Service (CYPMHS).

Students who have exhibited bullying behaviour will be supported by:

- Being offered opportunities to discuss their behaviour and how this impacts on others and themselves.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers to evoke a shared understanding and message to the young person
- Staff need to consider what might impact on the success of any intervention, for example, a young person with ASC may have difficulty understanding others or even their own feelings. A more factual/logical approach may initially be the best way to create change i.e. If you behave like this the school will respond in these ways which may be sanctioning in line with the schools behaviour policy. Beyond this ongoing support will be required to help the young person learn to interpret feelings as part of a process to improve relationships with others.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this could include support through Early Help or Specialist Children's Services, or support through the Children and Young People's Mental Health Service (CYPMHS).

13. Supporting Adults:

Meadows School takes measures to prevent and tackle bullying among Students; however, it is equally important to recognise that bullying of adults, including staff and parents, whether by Students, parents or other staff members, is unacceptable.

Adults who have been bullied or affected will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the concern with the designated safeguarding lead, a senior member of staff and/or the Principal.
- Advising them to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience, as appropriate.
- Where the bullying takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including online), the school will still investigate the concern and ensure that appropriate action is taken in accordance with the schools Code of Conduct and Barnardo's policies.
- Reporting offensive or upsetting content and/or accounts to the service provider, where the bullying has occurred online.
- Reassuring and offering appropriate support.
- Working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance.

Adults who have perpetrated the bullying will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened with a senior member of staff and/or the Principal to establish the concern.
- Establishing whether a legitimate grievance or concern has been raised and signposting to the school's official complaints procedures.
- If online, requesting that content be removed.
- Instigating disciplinary, civil or legal action as appropriate or required

14. Education & Training:

The school community will:

- Train all staff, including: teaching staff, support staff (e.g. administration staff, lunchtime support staff and site support staff) and pastoral staff, to identify all forms of bullying and take appropriate action, following the school's policy and procedures, including recording and reporting incidents.
- Consider a range of opportunities and approaches for addressing bullying throughout the curriculum and other activities, such as: through displays, assemblies, peer support, the school/student council, etc.
- Collaborate with other local educational settings as appropriate, and during key times of the year, for example during transition.
- Ensure anti-bullying has a high profile throughout the year, reinforced through key opportunities such as anti-bullying week
- Provide systematic opportunities to develop Students' social and emotional skills, including building their resilience and self-esteem.

15. Legal:

Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence in UK law, there are criminal laws that can apply in terms of harassment or threatening behaviour pertinent for cyberbullying. Some cyberbullying activities could be criminal offences under a range of different laws, including the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 and the Malicious Communications Act 1988

16. Reviewing Practice & Policy:

- The school will ensure that they regularly monitor and evaluate mechanisms to ensure that the policy is being consistently applied.
- Any issues identified will be incorporated into the school's action planning.
- The principal will be informed of bullying concerns, as appropriate.

17. Additional Information	
Copies of this policy may be obtained from:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content Server • The Main School Office
This policy links with the following policies & Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints Procedure • Online Safety Policy • Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy & Procedure • Safeguarding children policy • Prevention of Harassment Policy • Whistleblowing Policy
Relevant statutory guidance, circulars, legislation & other sources of information are:	<p>There are several pieces of legislation and guidance which set out measures and actions for schools in response to bullying, as well as criminal and civil law. These may include (but are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011 • The Equality Act 2010 • The Children Act 1989 • The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 • Protection from Harassment Act 1997 • The Malicious Communications Act 1988 • Public Order Act 1986 • Childnet's Cyberbullying guidance • DfE 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school' • Kelsi • Preventing and Tackling Bullying (.gov.uk) • Keeping Children Safe in Education • Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges
The lead member of staff is:	Eddie Reilly
Definitions and key terms used in this policy:	<p>Student: In the context of this document the term student refers to any service user of Meadows School</p> <p>Staff: In the context of this document the term staff refers to any staff, whether permanent, contingent, temporary or voluntary.</p>
The Rationale and Purpose of this policy:	To educate staff to the schools expectations around creating an environment where students feel safe and how we expect staff to respond to bullying behaviour.
Appendices:	Appendix A – Acceptable Use Agreement

Appendix A - Acceptable Use Agreement

4. E-SAFETY AGREEMENT

To ensure that everyone can be E-Safe, we have expectations of all students when using equipment that can access the internet. To help with this, all students are expected to sign and abide by this contract:

I agree to:

- Ask permission before I use the internet;
- Think carefully before I post a picture/video online, and never post a picture/video of someone else without their permission;
- Tell an adult I trust if I see something that makes me feel worried;
- Keep myself safe– I won't give out details about myself on line (like name, age, address, school, phone number); I will not use Webcam, Facetime, MSN or Skype with strangers. I will not tell other people about my location or plans;
- Not bully anyone on the Internet or when using a mobile phone. If I know of someone else being bullied, I will tell an adult I trust;
- Close any webpages straight away if it makes me feel uncomfortable;
- Only speak to and meet people I know in real life;
- Always check the privacy settings when I am on social networking sites (like Facebook), so only people I know can see my details;
- Only open emails from people I know;
- Keep passwords secret;
- To not use offensive language, including usernames as this could attract attention from unwelcome viewers;
- To not access sites that ask for personal details, such as bank account;
- To not use websites that I wouldn't tell staff/parents/carers about;
- Not to search for and/or access sites to share/download pornography;
- To only access age-appropriate sites/games;
- To follow School/Unit expectations about my mobile phone.

Failing to follow your contract could mean:

- Losing your access;
- Your parents/carers being informed;
- Staff searching your phone/iPad/etc. and removing inappropriate content if found or reporting to the police if necessary.

Signed:	(Student) Date:
Signed:	(Parent/Carer) Date: