

MARISH ACADEMY TRUST



Anti bullying Policy

Approved by: Strategic Board

Date: January 2025

Last reviewed on: January 2023

Next review due by: January 2027

Background

Through consultation with children, parents, staff and governors. All subsequent Anti-Bullying Policies continue to ensure the views of these key groups are reflected in the policy itself. The school councils at both Marish Primary School and Willow Primary School have actively reviewed and updated this policy.

Much of the discussion about what bullying is and how we should deal with it was presented to the children by our school council in a series of assemblies.

The result is a child friendly policy which incorporates many of the children's own thoughts and feelings on this issue. Moreover, the strategies for dealing with bullying when it occurs and for preventing it are the children's own suggestions in a response to role plays and question and answer sessions in the same assemblies.

A particular focus and emphasis has been placed, in recent times, on the growing and prevalent issues surrounding online safety and cyberbullying. In conjunction with one of our Safeguarding Leads.

Statement of Intent

At Marish Academy Trust we are committed to creating and maintaining a bullying-free zone; thus providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils where they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. It is our aim, if bullying does occur, that every child will feel able to tell an adult and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

Although this policy refers in the main to the children in our care, we are also aware of, and endorse, the anti –bullying measures for adults in the Slough Local Authority Personnel Guide.

What Is 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').

Bullying can be (but is not limited to):

- **Emotional**-being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- **Physical**-pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- **Racist**-racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- **Sexual**-unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- **Homophobic**- because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- **Verbal**- name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

- **Cyber-** this can include sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos.
- **Prejudiced-based and discriminatory-** bullying against people/ pupils with protected characteristics (i.e. bullying related to: faith, race, ethnicity/ nationality, culture, SEND, sexual orientation, gender etc...)

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying is recognised by Marish Academy Trust as being a form of child on child abuse. Abuse should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”. We also recognise that even if there are no reports of bullying, it does not mean it is not happening and it may be the case that it is just not being reported.

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

All victims will be taken seriously and offered appropriate support, regardless of where the abuse takes place.

Objectives of this Policy

Bullying will not be tolerated so:

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on 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 bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may exhibit several signs that they are being bullied. Whilst not an exhaustive list of behaviours, adults should investigate if a child exhibits any of the following behaviours or changes in behaviour:

- is frightened of walking to or from school or begs to be driven
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- changed their usual routine

- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering/ stuttering
- 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
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received

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

Procedures

1. All allegations of bullying will be investigated by staff.
2. If someone has been bullied, the incident will be recorded by staff.
3. In all recorded cases parents will be informed.
4. An attempt will be made to help the bully (or bullies) change their behaviour and if necessary reference will be made to the Outreach Behaviour Centre at Littledown. The use of trained staff may be appropriate in some cases in order to offer Restorative Justice. This will be done with the consent of all parties as well as parents/ carers of all parties.
5. If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted.

Outcomes

The bully (or bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences, such as making recompense for damage to property may be considered appropriate in some circumstances. If possible, the pupils will be reconciled. This may involve elements of restorative justice (under the guidance of a trained member of staff) should there be consent and it be in the best interests of all persons involved.

After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place. In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered (in line with our behaviour policy).

Supporting Pupils

- Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:
 - Reassuring the pupil and providing immediate pastoral support.
 - Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their teacher, the DSL, 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 any further concerns.
 - 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 Integrated Children Services or support through the Children and Young People's Mental Health Service (CYPMHS).
- Pupils who have perpetrated bullying will be helped by:
 - Discussing what happened, establishing the concern and the need to change.
 - Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child.
 - Providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions.
 - If online, requesting that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to service provider(s).

- Sanctioning, in line with school behaviour/discipline policy. This may include:
 - official warnings
 - detentions/internal exclusions
 - removal of privileges (including online access when encountering cyberbullying concerns)
 - in extreme or repeated cases, fixed-term or permanent exclusions.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this may include involvement from the Police or referrals to Integrated Children Services or Early Help or support through the Children and Young People's Mental Health Service (CYPMHS).

Prevention

We will use the following methods for helping children to prevent bullying before it starts and to encourage them to take appropriate action if they come across incidents of bullying:

- discussing bullying and the many forms it may take in both the classrooms and assemblies at least termly.
- focusing, at the start of each unit of Computing, on specific areas of cyber bullying. These will include enabling children to understand, identify and safely deal with incidents of cyber bullying with the strong emphasis on informing responsible adults as soon as possible.
- using PSHE lessons to read/write stories or poems, make up role-plays or draw pictures about bullying with the specific aim of developing awareness of bullying and why it must be stopped.
- involving children in the development of our anti bullying policy (see appendix 1 – which outlines how we continue to do this).
- compiling a child -friendly set of school guidelines for anti-bullying rules which are regularly reviewed – see Appendix 2 'Anti bullying Charters' drawn up by both schools.

- would aim to include reference to or involve ourselves in any local or national initiatives promoting anti-bullying, such as anti-bullying week every November. We are also engaged with initiatives developed by the police (the choices program) which focuses on understanding and celebrating diversity as well as equipping children with the understanding and strength to make appropriate choices when faced with difficult situations such as bullying.

Appendix 1: How we involved children in the development of our anti bullying policy

Anti-Bullying work by School Council as part of anti-bullying policy review
2024-2025

Reason for school council's involvement.

In our revised anti bullying policy 2025 (updated 2025) it states that: 'Much of the discussion about what bullying is and how we should deal with it was presented to the children by our school council in a series of assemblies in 2024 and 2025. The result is a child friendly policy which incorporates many of the children's own thoughts and feelings on this issue. Moreover, the strategies for dealing with bullying when it occurs and for preventing it, are the children's own suggestions in a response to role plays and question and answer sessions in the same assemblies.'

This is why we are continuing to involve School Council members at Marish and Willow in an effort to gain more feedback from the children themselves about how to prevent bullying in our school. It is also well established good practice to involve children in reviewing policies which directly affect them.

In the year 2024-2025, School Council is focusing on a **Kindness Project**, linking up with the charity 52 Lives to spread kindness and respect as much as possible. Councillors have made a Kindness Jar and all classes have a weekly challenge related to kindness, such as offering support for anyone who needs a friend at lunchtime. The councillors have designed and made certificates to reward those showing kindness and are focusing support at lunchtimes when bullying may take place. The Kindness Project enables councillors to discuss and support the anti-bullying policy on a weekly basis. They will be working on the addition of a Friendship Bench in the playground during the Summer term and will be creating an anti-bullying assembly as part of this initiative.

Appendix 2: Anti-Bullying Charters

Marish School **Anti-Bullying Charter**

Follow the diamond rules - care for everyone and everything, follow instructions straight away and show good manners at all times.

Show empathy, respect and forgiveness to others. Kindness is the key to everything.

Use your pupil voice and support anyone who is having a problem.

Always think carefully about the choices you make.

Have fun at playtimes and walk away from trouble.

Talk to someone you trust if you have a problem - make sure you put yourself first and always tell an adult.

Use the worry box when needed.

Willow School Anti-Bullying Charter

Follow the diamond rules - care for everyone and everything, follow instructions straight away and show good manners at all times.

Show empathy, respect and forgiveness to others. Kindness is the key to everything.

Use your pupil voice and support anyone who is having a problem.

Always think carefully about the choices you make.

Have fun at playtimes and walk away from trouble.

Talk to someone you trust if you have a problem - make sure you put yourself first and always tell an adult.

Use the worry box when needed.