Anti – bullying Policy

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Meeting your communication needs:
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St Merryn School Anti Bullying Policy

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"We require every member of the school to behave in a considerate way and to respect the rights of others."

OUR POLICY IS BASED ON A POSITIVE APPROACH. OUR AIMS ARE TO:
1: prevent bullying
2: deal promptly with any incident of bullying if, and when, it occurs
3: promote self-esteem among all pupils, including the bullied and those who suffer from the need to bully
4 encourage pupils to speak out and TELL if bullying is taking place
5: encourage all pupils to help and protect others within the Trust

Our approach to bullying is a **'whole school'** approach. We expect everyone to act with courtesy and consideration to others at all times and to always try to understand the other person's point of view. Neither staff nor pupils will condone or ignore bullying of any nature and anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated. "It is important to distinguish between bullying behaviour and an outright condemnation of the whole person. Bullying behaviour is often an expression of inward distress, the passing on of negative behaviour, confusion about one's own worth or an extreme need to bolster self-esteem".

All members of the school will be encouraged and trained to recognise but not accept bullying of any form and if they ever experience, see or suspect bullying is taking place to **ALWAYS** speak up and **TELL** someone. **ALL OF US WILL LISTEN** and **ALL OF US WILL ACT** by involving appropriate staff.

Our school will:
- support staff to identify and respond to bullying through regular training and updates so that all staff understand the purpose of the policy, our duty of care towards our pupils and the skills needed to deal with such incidents particularly where it occurs in respect of the protected characteristics.
- make pupils aware that we listen and all bullying issues will be dealt with sensitively and effectively
- work towards creating an anti-bullying culture by ensuring our children are clear about our approach to bullying and the part they themselves play in this approach
- ensure that parents/carers also understand our approach to bullying issues and that if they express concerns about bullying they feel confident that their concerns will be taken seriously
- learn from effective anti-bullying work elsewhere to contribute towards regular evaluations and updates of the school's approach to dealing with bullying
- discuss, monitor and review incidents of bullying to ensure we create a safe inclusive environment for all of our pupils eliminating any prejudicial behaviours.

St Merryn School recognises that in any large group of people there will always be some bullying and however undesirable, it needs to be recognised as a reality. Our policy of preventative intervention is intended to create a safer climate where we can maintain our friendly, caring, yet hard-working atmosphere and where all pupils can feel confident that, as an individual, they are important.

We achieve this through our work in PSHE lessons, our focus on Rights Respecting Schools and through the golden thread of our shared values that are explored in lessons and in assemblies. We encourage our children to recognise and celebrate differences that exist between people that could be a launchpad for bullying such as race, disability, gender, sexuality, appearance, socio-economic circumstance or family situations.

This policy aims to support the ethos of good behaviour and respect across the school both within the physical environment (classrooms, dinner hall, playgrounds, toilets etc) and in the relationships that exist at school. This policy is based on DfE guidance 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' July 2017 and supporting documents. It also considers the DfE statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024' and 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges' guidance. The setting has also read Childnet's 'Cyberbullying: Understand, Prevent and Respond: Guidance for Schools'.

Definition of 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, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often **motivated by prejudice** against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences."

(DfE, Preventing and tackling bullying. 2017)

"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.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating. Since September 2014 a greater focus on how well school leaders tackle lowlevel disruption was included in Ofsted inspections."

(DfE, Preventing and tackling bullying. 2017)

Bullying means that one child is **deliberately** (usually) using his or her **power** over another to make them feel bad. Bullying is not having a single argument or fight. It isn't saying something bad to someone once when you are angry. Bullying goes on deliberatively (on purpose) **over a period of time.**

(SEAL definition)

Forms and types of bullying
Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person either physically or emotionally, by intimidating or demeaning others. It is usually persistent and is often covert, and is a conscious attempt to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

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Bullying can happen to anyone and can be, but not limited to:

- **Emotional**: Derogatory name calling of an insulting and/or personal nature. Demanding money, material goods or favours by means of threat or force.
- **Physical**: Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence because of some perceived physical, economic, sexual, intellectual, cultural or racial difference.
- **Racist**: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- **Sexual**: Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- **Homophobic**: because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality. Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying is unacceptable
- **Verbal**: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, abuse and threats. Ridiculing an individual.
- **Cyber**: All areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse. Mobile threats by text messaging & calls. Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities • **Prejudicial**: (against people/pupils 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

Prejudice Related Bullying
Under the Equalities Act 2010 it is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:
- age
- being or becoming a transsexual person
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or having a child
- disability
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin including Gypsy, Roma, Travellers
- religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- sex / gender
- sexual orientation

These are called 'protected characteristics'. As part of the requirement on schools to promote fundamental British values, schools must proactively challenge derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour including that which is racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist in nature. We will record these types of bullying, even that which represents a one-off incident through Safeguarding Manager and report all incidents to our governing body on a termly basis.

Preventing bullying
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 children (peer on peer abuse)
- Recognises the potential for children with SEND and disabilities to be disproportionally impacted by bullying and will implement additional pastoral support as required

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- 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

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF BULLYING – Signs for Parents/ Carers and staff to look out for:
Parents and Teachers are in ideal positions to be able to observe changes in a pupil's behaviour, which may indicate that they are being subjected to bullying, **so look out for**:

- Items of clothing, property, school work, etc. that are damaged or lost more often than you would consider to be normal
- Frequent injuries to the child (bruises, cuts, etc)
- Withdrawal, which may lead to low participation in school and other activities, isolation or self-harm
- Those who spend a lot of time in their bedroom, possibly crying; who find it difficult to sleep, wet the bed or have nightmares. Teachers within school may be aware that the pupil always appears tired
- Educational attainment being slowly or suddenly reduced
- A reluctance to go to school.
- Poor self-esteem, which inhibits pupils from forming positive relationships, leads to feelings of worthlessness and betrayal, and causes some to lower their expectations and standards of work
- Anxiety and depression, which can lead to intermittent and long-term absence from school, physical illness or psychosomatic complaints
- Requests to be accompanied going to and from school, or to go by a different route. If this is longer than the previous one, it could well indicate that bullying has been occurring along the previous route.
- Money in the house or school going missing
- Depression in the child. Reluctance to eat or play normally. Child appears generally unhappy, miserable, moody and/or irritable
- The pupil who threatens or attempts to commit suicide

Taken individually, or even collectively, the above may not be due to bullying, but a combination of even some of these signs could be a good reason to suspect it. If a pupil is showing signs of, or is experiencing ANY of the above, it can be an indication that all is not well, the pupil is not happy and therefore, whatever the cause, it should be investigated.

Five Stage approach to dealing with bullying (includes Inclusive Incident Breakdown)
Our policy ensures a consistency of expectations and approach by all within the school. If a parent/ carer or member of staff suspects/ reports bullying we initiate our 5-stage approach to investigate and resolve bullying issues. The investigation part of the approach is based on an 'Inclusive Incident Breakdown' model for considering both the 'victim' and the 'perpetrator' which has an emphasis on repairing relationships through validation and needs identification for the 'victim' and responsibility and reflection for the 'perpetrator':

Stage 1
Parent, child, someone informs the school of the problem
Class Teacher meets with all children involved and explains seriousness of problem and agrees
strategies to sort problem. (keep notes on Safeguarding Manager)
Class Teacher feeds back strategies agreed to informing parent
Class Teacher alerts all staff (especially midday) to the problem and
monitors.
Class Teacher informs appropriate line manager e.g. Assistant
Headteacher.
End of week – Teacher meets with all children again to discuss progress
A range of strategies will be used at this stage with regular end of week
feedback.
Monitor for 2 weeks.
If problem persists, move to stage 2:
Stage 2
Class Teacher meets parents of all children involved individually and explains issues and agrees ways
forward. (record of meeting on Safeguarding Manager)
Class Teacher meets with all children involved and discusses agreed way forward. (keep notes on
Safeguarding Manager)
Previous alerting and monitoring repeated and mentioned at staff briefings
End of week – Teacher meets with all children again to discuss progress
Progress reported to all Parents (records kept on Safeguarding Manager)
A range of strategies will be used at this stage with regular end of
feedback.

Monitor for 2 weeks.

If problem persists, move to stage 3:

Stage 3

Assistant Head and Class Teacher meets with all children and explains seriousness of problem and
agrees way forward (keep notes on Safeguarding Manager)
Assistant Head and Class Teacher meets Parents of all children involved individually and explains
issues and agrees ways forward. (record of meeting kept on Safeguarding Manager)
Previous alerting and monitoring repeated and messages reinforced at staff briefings
End of week procedure repeated with Assistant Headteacher and Class Teacher.
Progress reported to all parents (records kept on Safeguarding Manager)

Monitor for 2 weeks.

If problem persists, move to stage 4:

Stage 4

Headteacher/ Assistant Head meets with all children and explains seriousness of problem and agrees
way forward (keep notes on Safeguarding Manager)
Head Teacher meets parents of all children involved individually and explains issues and agrees
ways forward. (record of meeting on Safeguarding Manager)
Previous alerting and monitoring repeated
End of week procedures repeated with Assistant Head and Head Teacher

Progress reported to all Parents (records kept on Safeguarding Manager)

Monitor for 2 weeks.

If problem persists, move to stage 5:

Stage 5

Other strategies including suspension considered
At any point, if the situation is deemed to be serious, we can and will accelerate the stages to protect a child.
OUR POLICY WILL BE MADE CLEAR TO THE FOLLOWING GROUPS:
  I. Staff - teaching/non-teaching
  II. Pupils
  III. Parents
  IV. Governors
  V. Others connected with our School, e.g. School Transport drivers, voluntary helpers, neighbours etc.

If you suspect your child is being bullied, please contact your child's Class Teacher in the first instance.

Action Guidance Notes for Teachers and Parents when dealing with SUSPECTED BULLYING OBSERVE...LISTEN...ACT...
The first and often most difficult hurdle to overcome is that of accepting that there is, possibly, the problem of bullying with your child in our school. Once it has been brought into the open, the way should be made clear for everybody to work together, without recriminations and without being confrontational. By making it clear that anti-social behaviour will not be condoned by anyone, there will be nowhere for the bully to hide. It is normally only after we have explored every avenue using a "no blame approach" that we would consider other responses. If the event is particularly violent or no perceived improvement is noted and bullying continues, the Headteacher may well decide that exclusion is the only way to protect the pupil population of the school.
The following suggestions have not been separated into actions to be taken by the pupils, by the parents, by the staff, by the Headteacher, Governors, etc., etc. It is the combination of action that will bring about the greatest results.

OBSERVE ... Look for changes in behaviour, patterned absenteeism, unaccustomed excuses and anything unusual. Having said that, don't jump to conclusions from what might be just a one-off incident ... continue to observe.

LISTEN ... with empathy and tact. Provide a quiet area where the pupil can talk to someone she/he can trust. There may well be a genuine problem which desperately needs sorting out quickly. It may be the problem is a perceived situation but that will make it none the less distressing; it may even be in some cases a form of attention seeking but that too needs investigation to discover the cause of this need. Handle any confidential information with sensitivity. Make every pupil feel valued.

ACT ... do something positive. Provide good role models, safe havens, programmes on conflict resolution, assertiveness training. Keep the pupils involved, get their suggestions. Once identified, restrict the opportunities the bully has for bullying. Break up troublesome groups. Monitor problem areas. Encourage pupils to accept individual differences; not to put themselves in a position where

they might get bullied; try to get them to ignore jibes and not to respond. Instil in the pupils that it is vitally important to TELL someone if they are experiencing problems, tell someone in whom they have confidence, which could be a member of staff, or another friend and **not just tell but make sure action is taken. Be persistent until it is!**

Cyberbullying

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the school will act in line with the e-safety policy:

- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified
- 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 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 pupils' electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law and in line with the the DFE *Searching, screening and confiscation at school* guidance and *Childnet cyberbullying* guidance.
- Requesting the deletion of locally-held content and content posted online if they contravene school behavioural policies

Ensure that sanctions are applied to the person responsible for the cyberbullying; the school will take steps to change the attitude and behaviour of the person displaying bullying behaviours, as well as ensuring access to any additional help that they may need

Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed

Provide information to staff and pupils (through PSHE lessons) 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.

Useful contacts:

Remember the following contacts can be useful when seeking help:

Childline 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children – www.nspcc.org.uk 0808 800 5000

Antibullying

Cornwall - 0800 5875991 or e-mail: abc@vscornwall.org.uk

Cornwall Anti-racism Project 07881 551320

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Victim Support Cornwall 0845 0567 999 e-mail:
support@vscornwall.org.uk