

Mendip Edge Federation
Anti-Bullying Policy **March 2016**
(an appendix to our Behaviour Policy)

Rationale

The vision of the Mendip Edge Federation is to promote community cohesion and the well-being of all our pupils. As children grow and develop we aim to support them in developing both a sense of their own identity and a sense of belonging to a family, school and society as a whole. Across the Federation schools we have high expectations of behaviour, however we are aware that bullying can take place in any school of setting and regard preventing, raising awareness and consistently responding to any cases of bullying as a priority to ensure the safety and well-being of our pupils.

In all our schools we aim to keep the pupils safe from bullying, harassment and discrimination. Bullying is never tolerated and every report of bullying is investigated and dealt with in an age appropriate manner. Reports are always managed in an emotionally intelligent manner and often include restorative approaches.

There are many links between this policy and other aspects of our work and associated policies, most notably:

- Governors' Statement of Principles of Behaviour
- School Behaviour Policies
- Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy
- Equalities Policy
- SEN Policy
- On-line Safety Policy
- School Vision, Aims and Values

Pupils from across the Federation have worked together to create their own 'Bullying Charter' which is clearly displayed around the school and is regularly referred to in assemblies and by tutors/class teachers. The text of the charter is included at the end of this policy.

Our Home-School Agreement also requires parents to '*let the school know about concerns or problems*', we are certain that this will make things better for children, not make matters worse and we acknowledge that this is sometimes the fear of some people.

Definition of Bullying

As a Federation we have adopted the definition produced by pupils as part of the Somerset UK Youth Parliament:

Bullying: A physical, psychological, or verbal attack on a person or a group of people, by a person or a group, causing harm to the victim. The bully is usually aware of the harm they are causing and often repeats their actions.

Some examples may include:

- Physical – hitting, offensive or threatening gestures, theft or interference with personal belongings
- Verbal/text – name calling, taunting, mocking
- On-line bullying – text messaging, prank mobile calls, inappropriate use of social network sites
- Emotional/Indirect – spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups

With our youngest children the acronym STOP (**S**everal **T**imes **O**n **P**urpose) is used to help children differentiate between bullying and occasional poor behaviour. Bullying is not when children have the odd argument, fall out or engage in a one off tussle.

Implementation of Policy

- Bullying can seriously damage a young person's confidence and self-worth; it is the responsibility of all staff to be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and consistently in line with this policy. We acknowledge that sometimes the worst aspect of bullying may be the fear of being bullied and what might happen next. It is essential therefore that as far as possible the bullied pupil, and sometimes others too, understand that standing up to bullying by 'telling someone' is the right thing to do and will lessen the risk of bullying rather than make matters worse. We expect to have the reputation of being a 'telling' school.
- To minimise bullying, pupils will be actively taught what bullying is and that it is unacceptable; through assemblies, tutor time, cross curricular work such as 'Health Week' and within the taught curriculum of subjects such as English, citizenship, PSHE, PE and humanities. During November every year we have a particular focus week on Anti-Bullying as part of 'Anti-bullying Week'.
- We will also teach the role bystanders play in actively but safely tackling bullying.
- Pupils are regularly referred to the Bullying Charter which is displayed clearly around the school. The key expectation of the pupils' Bullying Charter is '*Tell someone*' both if a pupil has experienced or seen bullying.
- Information about bullying must be shared with class teachers and Year Heads, Assistant Headteacher or Headteacher as appropriate to the setting.
- Parents should inform the school of any concerns about bullying especially where there is information they feel we may be unaware of. The school will scrutinise the Parents' Questionnaire as a way of identifying the extent to which bullying is an issue.
- Where Governors are informed of a bullying incident it is important that full details are shared with the school. As with child protection/safeguarding issues it would not be appropriate to keep a confidence if this may lead to continued bullying.

Policy into Practice

Schools within the Mendip Edge Federation will:

- investigate all incidents of alleged bullying with urgency
- ensure that clear accounts/statements will be recorded
- ensure that Class Teachers/ Year heads and Tutors are fully informed
- ensure that wherever possible parents are fully informed. This is especially urgent where a child may be returning home in a distressed state.
- deal with incidents professionally, with sensitivity and consultation with appropriate staff.
- use anonymous surveys to establish the pupils' perceptions of bullying at least annually.

Those who are bullied:

- Are often those in a position where it is difficult for them to defend themselves. They will be supported with strategies and advice that will help them be part of the solution.
- Will be supported, often by the member of staff who discovered or to whom the bullying was first reported by the child.
- Will be given reassurance to restore confidence and raise self esteem. They will be shown respect for their courage in confronting the bullying.
- May need advice about how to minimise the risk of bullying in future life

Those who have bullied:

- Will be listened to
- Will be given a clear link between unwanted behaviour, outcomes for others (including both victims and bystanders) and sanctions
- Will have their parents fully informed in order for subsequent sanctions to be managed in partnership with families. Parents are expected to play a positive part in supporting this policy as part of our home-school agreement
- Strategies/Sanctions which may be used include:
 - Official warnings involving parents
 - Restorative justice conferencing
 - Restriction of certain activity such as break and lunchtime
 - Detention during or after school
 - Formal fixed-term exclusion (internal or external)
 - Permanent exclusion
- Will also be given strategies to enable them to develop more responsible attitudes and leave behind negative reputations.

The pupils of the schools within the Mendip Edge Federation have agreed an Anti bullying Charter.