



Mulberry Tree School Initiative

Anti-Bullying Policy

raised July 2011

This Policy & Procedure takes into account *Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence* published by the DfE & Safe to Learn.

www.des.gov.uk/bullying/teachersindex.shtml Definition:

The term "bullying" refers to any hostile action, verbal, physical, or emotional specifically directed against a more vulnerable individual or group by another individual or group. Bullying, so defined, is not acceptable and we will do all we can to prevent it happening, and deal with it if it does happen.

Anti-bullying Policy

Objectives of this Policy:

- To ensure that all Trustees, Members, Teaching, Non-Teaching Staff and Parents, as well as those interested in the school are made aware of the schools definition of bullying and what it is within an anthroposophical context.
- To ensure that all Trustees, Members, Teaching, Non-Teaching Staff and Parents as well as those interested in the school understand the schools policy and procedures in relation to 'bullying'.
- To assure individuals and parents that they will be supported in any claims relating to 'bullying' or similar behaviours. This policy acknowledges the schools dedication to be active in response to changing inappropriate behavior which it does not tolerate.
- This policy has been written to establish our Initiative. It's been created by reviewing a wide perspective of other schools working practice, rather than from need.

Rationale

The Mulberry Tree is a Steiner School Initiative. Our foremost consideration is the children. However we also consider adults in the school environment and their ability to successfully meet the needs of all their children appropriately when there is a child with a behaviour which is challenging. The following statement of intent is to clarify our position.

We are dedicated to understanding and providing without exception a secure and safe environment which will enable our children to develop naturally both as an individual and socially. Our training gives us the ability and skills to deliver a Waldorf curriculum in a suitable environment enabling children to become social beings. Each one is part of the group and their social ability is determined by how they behave.

Everyone at the Mulberry Tree has the right to feel welcome, secure, and happy. Bullying prevents this being able to happen. This policy contains guidelines to support the ethos at Mulberry Tree.



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Where bullying exists the victims should feel confident to activate the anti-bullying systems within the school to end the bullying and be supported by those to whom they make a disclosure.

Bullying may be observed as:

Physical: pushing, kicking, pinching, hitting, scratching punching, biting, pulling

Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, threatening gestures

Racist: racial taunts, gestures

Sexual: unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive comments

Verbal: name –calling, teasing, exclusion, intimidating.

Possible signs or symptoms are:

A child may indicate through signs and behaviour that he or she is being 'bullied'. Parents, Teachers and Guardians should be aware of the following possible indications or signs and should investigate / respond as recommended within the policy:

- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to playgroup/kindergarten (school phobic)
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in given tasks/projects
- comes home with clothes torn
- has possessions which go 'missing'
- has unexplained cuts, bruises, scratches
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- considers imaginary revenge plans/retribution
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- wets bed / pants
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

It is important to note that these signs and behaviour could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Importance of Response

We are committed to ensuring that every child is free to develop naturally. It is absolutely essential to respond appropriately and effectively in order to ensure a secure and safe environment for both victim and perpetrator, to enable this development. Parents tend to send their children to Steiner schools because this natural development is encouraged and not impeded.

The individual who is being victimised as well as the parent/s or guardians involved need to be acknowledged; reassured that their child is safe and can feel secure. It is important to reassure them that this is not behaviour that should be imitated, and that the school does not



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tolerate this type of behaviour. Help will be given both within the educational setting and at home where possible. The perpetrator as well as their parents will be made aware that their behaviour is upsetting and should be changed. If asked by the parents of the perpetrator or perpetrators necessary help will be offered to support their needs to learn different ways of behaving both within the educational setting and if necessary within their own homes.

Community Response to Bullying

The School works hard to ensure that all pupils know the difference between bullying and simply "falling out". Bullying is not the same as quarrelling-all children will fall out with each other from time to time. Not all aggression is bullying, or all name-calling. It becomes bullying when it is exercised through the use of power, rather than an exchange between equals, and may be qualified by its continuity.

We are all vigilant for signs of inappropriate behaviour towards another, and listen to a child's report of an incident and take them seriously. We will use the curriculum where ever possible to reinforce the ethos of the school and help pupils to develop strategies to combat bullying-type behaviour.

Pupils are encouraged to report any incidence of bullying to an adult within school, and , or when another pupil tells them that they are being bullied or if they see bullying taking place it is their responsibility to report their knowledge to a member of staff.

All reported incidents of bullying will be investigated and taken seriously by staff members. A record will be kept of incidents (see Appendix 1). The class teacher of the victim is responsible for this.

Parents are reminded to inform their children that they must tell someone should they ever be bullied. Keeping information from the school, or from their parents, will never help a problem to be solved, and will prolong the period a victim has to suffer.

Bullying incidents will be reported at the weekly staff meeting.

Upon discovery of an incident of bullying, we will discuss with the children the issues appropriate to the incident and to their age and level of understanding. A problem-solving approach may help. The adult will try to remain neutral and 'no blame' will be attached. Each pupil must be given an opportunity to talk and the discussion should remain focused on finding a solution to the problem and stopping the bullying recurring.

Strategies for Prevention:

1. Raising consciousness of the issue and promoting open discussion through work with the class
2. Periodic 'focus' on bullying in our pedagogical meetings
3. Discussing the issues with parents

Procedures for dealing with bullying

Stage 1: initial response in cases of suspected or actual bullying: this might take the form of a pedagogical story for the youngest classes, discussion in the class or personal interview with the class teacher.

Stage 2: If bullying continues or resumes, the following steps should normally be taken by the class teacher.



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4. Inform parents of both bully and victim and try to enlist their support, Make sure also that bully and parents understand that any repetition could lead to a suspension or exclusion.
5. Report to Teachers Meeting and ask colleagues to monitor situation.
6. Consider a Child Study.
7. Work out with colleagues an appropriate strategy (interview, counselling, School Doctor etc)
8. Inform parents of the strategy adopted.

Stage 3: If at the end of stage 2 bullying continues or if, without Stages 1 and 2 having been activated, a single act of gross bullying occurs, then pupils may be suspended. The committee will be informed and may decide that a suspension should be converted to a permanent exclusion. At every stage keep written notes of all meetings/conversation and put them in the pupil's file.

Procedures check list in regard to the process

Within the school community, good relations are always fostered between the parents and the teachers. Indeed, given the nature and size of the school, we actively encourage parents or individuals who have issues to present these issues to their child's teacher, class representative or the school administrator. The issue is then assessed and appropriate action taken.

- The incident would be reported to a member of the staff.
- The incident/s would be recorded by staff.
- Appropriate action would be considered, agreed and actioned (see above) through consultations with parents, teachers, assistant teachers, school administrator/senco.
- A time or length of time which would be appropriate for the situation to be resolved would also be agreed.
- At any time within this plan, if necessary, a home visit would be arranged for further discussions

With regards to the child experiencing consistent negative behaviour (also known as the victim), we would:-

- ensure the child feels safe and secure in school
- give physical and emotional support
- encourage the child to relay feelings/reactions
- carefully monitor and assess the child
- maintain frequent communications with the parent/s/guardian

With regards to the child who has problems with consistent negative behaviour, also known as the perpetrator, we would:-

- ensure the child feels safe and secure in school;
- give physical and emotional support
- ensure child is given reinforcement of desired behaviour through imitation of loving gesture and repetition



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- ensure child is kept close to member of staff if appropriate
- carefully monitor and assess the child
- maintain frequent communications with the parent/s/guardian

Resolving inappropriate behaviour

as a result of consultations between parents and colleagues.

- In the cases of impulse reactions involving say for example pinching, hitting we would advise the child be made subtly aware of limb engagement
- We would emphasise the importance of reducing unnecessary nerve/sense stimulation (eg: tv.media etc).
- We might suggest dietary inclusions or exclusions.
- We would actively encourage the parent/guardian that their anxiety was not shown or revealed unnecessarily to the child. We feel that the child's future is profoundly influenced by the people about him and as such reactionary impulses on the part of the guardian will find reflection within the child's' psyche and imitative actions. It is therefore of paramount importance that the child be surrounded by activities and responses worthy of imitation.
- We would suggest a home visit
- The child's home rhythm may need moderation.
- The parents of the perpetrator or perpetrators will be offered to support their needs to learn different ways of behaving both within the educational setting and if necessary within their own homes.
- We will take pedagogical steps.

Outcomes

Parent and teachers collaborating is a huge spiritual incentive. Parents and colleagues are kept informed of any decisions or changes both with regards to the behaviour in question, improvements or consequences necessary. This is done in person or by letter and time moderated.

In cases where special needs are determined a different course may be necessary.

Subsequent to the incident/s having been investigated and dealt with, in each case, monitoring will ensure the consistent negative behaviour is not repeated.

In exceptional circumstances exclusion would be considered either temporarily or permanent



Appendix1

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Bullying Incident Report Form

Name of Pupil _____

Class

Date

Details of incident

Incident reported to

Action taken

Signed by Pupil

Signed by the Class teacher