



The Maria Montessori Training Organisation
trading as
The Maria Montessori Institute

Anti-Bullying Policy

We aim, as a school, to produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety

What is bullying?

Bullying is a repeated action taken by one or more children with the deliberate intention of hurting another child, either physically or emotionally.

Bullying is any behaviour by one child to another that is intimidating, cohesive, threatening or violent. It may be of a physical, verbal or social nature. It may also be a combination of these. A child who is bullying has reached a stage of cognitive development where he or she is able to plan to carry out a premeditated intent to cause distress to another.

Bullying can occur in children five years old and over and may well be an issue in after school clubs and holiday schemes catering for slightly older children. It is recognised that many children will, in the process of developing relationships with other children, experiment with socially unacceptable behaviour. This does not make a child 'a bully' but does require an immediate and clear response from the school. It is also recognised that there are playground games such as mock fighting that some children find intimidating. Name-calling is always intimidating.

The effects of bullying

All forms of bullying are hurtful and may have a devastating effect on those who are bullied. Whilst some children may recover from bullying, there are others who suffer lasting consequences. Children who are bullied may see themselves as inadequate and friendless and suffer from loss of confidence and low self-esteem.

Bullies may also suffer from long lasting consequences and if offered no support, may continue with bullying behaviour into their adult lives. For this reason, it is important that they receive support to enable them to change their behaviour.

Strategies in use at the Children's House and School to address bullying

Preventative strategies

The school behaviour policy makes expectations clear to children in class about their behaviour with others and promoting positive behaviours.

Strategies include constantly improving the school's grounds, creating more co-operative play space and variety in the environment, reducing the domination of the playground by



rough games, and football. Constructive and collaborative play opportunities must also be provided.

Spotting bullying

Much of the behaviour which leads to both bullying and intimidation is difficult to observe or can be seen as innocent when it is not. It is therefore essential that staff listen carefully to what children say and watch for any signs that a child may be being intimidated. The staff must always pass on their concern to the other members of staff working with the child and report these concerns to the lead teacher.

Once a bullying incident has occurred

The children are constantly encouraged to tell someone.

We involve parents of all parties.

If a child bullies another child or children:

- we show the children who have been bullied that we are able to listen to their concerns and act upon them;
- we intervene to stop the child who is bullying from harming the other child or children;
- we explain to the child doing the bullying why her/his behaviour is not acceptable;
- we give reassurance to the child or children who have been bullied;
- we help the child who has done the bullying to recognise the impact of their actions;
- we make sure that children who bully receive positive feedback for considerate behaviour and are given opportunities to practise and reflect on considerate behaviour;
- we do not label children who bully as 'bullies';
- we recognise that children who bully may be experiencing bullying themselves, or be subject to abuse or other circumstance causing them to express their anger in negative ways towards others;
- we recognise that children who bully are often unable to empathise with others and for this reason we do not insist that they apologise unless it is clear that they feel genuine remorse for what they have done. Empty apologies are just as hurtful to the bullied child as the original behaviour;
- we discuss what has happened with the parents of the child who did the bullying and work out with them a plan for handling the child's behaviour; and
- we share what has happened with the parents of the child who has been bullied, explaining that the child who did the bullying is being helped to adopt more acceptable ways of behaving.

All staff are informed and asked to particularly look out for the victim and the bully.

Bully victims are given the space to say how they would like incidents to be dealt with.



Children vary:

- Some like to talk to the bully face to face with a teacher present
- Some like to have a member of staff deal directly with the bully
- Some just want the school to watch out for incidents at first
- Some want the chance for a supervised talk with friends to sort out relationship problems

It depends on the nature and severity of the bullying.

Once a situation has been resolved we ask bully victims and bullies how they are on a regular basis.

Advice to children about bullying

If you are a victim of bullying, you can tell a member of staff and/or your parent/carer (anyone you feel safe to talk to). It is not weak to do this.

If you cannot tell anyone at school, you can tell your parents.

Friends of victims should let staff know of bullying incidents.

No-one deserves to be bullied – remember you have a right for this not to happen to you.

Advice to parents/carers about bullying

If your child is bullying or being bullied they may:

Change their behaviour

Be unwilling to talk about their day – it is quite common for children not to want to talk about their day directly after school. You might find children more willing to talk during bath time or bedtime story when they are more relaxed

Look less happy

Come home with toys and things you have not bought for them

Not want to wear their glasses

Take things from home without you knowing

Avoid certain children or activities

Be reluctant to go to school

How can parents help to prevent bullying?

- Everybody gets angry. Help your child to express it without hurting others
- Encourage your child to tell a member of staff straightaway if they get hurt at school
- Praise your child when they sort out problems by talking rather than hurting others
- Involve yourself in school activities
- Make immediate contact with the school at any time over bullying incidents



- Do not intervene with other children's parents, but let the school know
- Allow the school to seek further professional advice and support over difficult bullying

Conclusion

This is a definition of bullying that should be read to children (*Olweus 1991*):

'A pupil is being bullied or picked on, when another pupil or group of pupils says nasty things to him or her. It is also bullying when a pupil is hit, kicked, threatened, locked inside a room, sent nasty notes, when no-one talks to them and things like that. These things can happen frequently and it is difficult for the pupil to defend him/herself. It is also bullying when a pupil is teased repeatedly in a nasty way.

However if two pupils of equal power or strength have an occasional fight or quarrel, this is not bullying'.

Bullying outside a school's premises

As a school we are not responsible for bullying off our premises. The bullying may be by pupils at the school, pupils at other schools, or people not at school at all.

Pupils should not suffer in silence. Where a pupil reports bullying off the school premises, a range of steps may be taken:

- Talk to the local police about problems on local streets (if necessary seek a police presence at trouble spots)
- Talk to the transport company about bullying on buses and trains
- Talk to the head of another school whose pupils are bullying off the premises
- Map safe routes to school, and tell pupils about them (software available from Map IT Ltd. Tel: 01487 813745)
- Talk to pupils about how to avoid or handle bullying outside the school premises

Sanctions

When tougher measures are needed

Where pupils do not respond to preventive strategies to combat bullying, the Children's House and School will need to take tougher action to deal with persistent and violent bullying. As part of our discipline policy, we have a sufficient range of sanctions to deal with this type of bullying. We ensure that the whole school community knows what sanctions will be taken. They are fairly and consistently applied. Sanctions include:

- Removal from the group (in class)
- Withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges
- Withholding participation in any school trip or sports events that are not an essential part of the curriculum
- Fixed period exclusion



Where serious violence is involved, the lead teacher can and should normally permanently exclude a pupil.