



The Maria Montessori Training Organisation  
trading as  
The Maria Montessori Institute

## Anti-Bullying

### Guidelines for staff regarding the implementation of the bullying policy

#### **Establishing a whole-school policy in four stages**

The policy needs to set out strategies to be followed, backed up by systems to ensure effective implementation, monitoring and review. There are four main stages to establishing a policy:

#### **Stage 1 – Awareness-raising and consultation**

A policy will only be effective if everybody in school has discussed and understood the problem of bullying, and agreed on good and bad practice.

Awareness-raising helps people understand the problem and agree a definition of bullying. Developing your own definition will promote useful discussion.

Some schools have found the following approach helpful, with adults and children, in cases where the bullying is of a less severe nature:

- Each person recalls examples of bullying experienced or witnessed
- They explain why these were ‘bullying’, rather than other forms of aggression
- In pairs or small groups they discuss their observations, noting areas of agreement and disagreement about the features of bullying
- A consensus emerges, and a definition is established

A working party can help with formulating the policy. Lunchtime supervisors, teachers and children may offer valuable perspectives. Such working parties need careful management and strong leadership. The agreed policy should be short, succinct and written in language that everyone understands. It should include:

- A definition of bullying, including racist, sexist and homophobic bullying
- Aims and objectives
- Procedures to follow – who to tell, how to record bullying, sanctions
- Intervention techniques, curriculum support, training policy, play policy (depending on resources)

Our anti-bullying policy dovetails with the school’s behaviour policy. It should be clear what the sanctions are for bullying and in what circumstances they will apply. Strong sanctions such as exclusion may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying.



## **Stage 2 – Implementation**

The Executive Director should give a clear lead so staff know what to do when an incident is reported. They need to act consistently. An anti-bullying launch involving the whole school may help.

Direct action should remind pupils that all forms of bullying are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Damage, injury or theft and other incidents demand a serious response. Involving parents early is essential, and they might wish to involve the police as necessary. Keep accurate records of incidents – and the school’s response – to help with proceedings and protect the school from legal action.

It is essential to follow up after an incident to check that the bullying has not started again. Do this within two weeks, and again within the following half term. Immediately after intervention, the bullying is likely to stop. However, research shows bullying can be very persistent and may recur. If pupils expect follow-up, they are unlikely to start bullying again.

## **Stage 3 – Monitoring**

Monitoring by a key member of staff identifies progress and enables follow-up, showing whether the policy is really effective. Make clear under what circumstances records should be used for monitoring, how long they will be kept, and who should have access to them.

It is essential to follow up the launch of a policy with regular reminders. A low-profile policy can be easily forgotten, and in subsequent years, new pupils need to be made aware of the policy.

## **Stage 4 – Evaluation**

Use data from monitoring and feedback, which staff, families, pupils and steering committee provide, to review and update the policy at least once every school year. A termly report to the Executive Director may be helpful. Following this policy should mean that:

- Staff are more vigilant and responsive to bullying
- Fewer pupils report being bullied or that they bully others.
- More pupils say they would not join in bullying someone else.
- More pupils would tell a member of staff they were being bullied

Sometimes all indicators are positive, sometimes results are mixed. Awareness-raising increases pupils’ understanding of bullying, and makes them more likely to report incidents.