



The Maria Montessori Training Organisation
trading as
The Maria Montessori Institute

Anti-Bullying in School Policy

This policy has regard to:

- The Equality Act, 2010
- SEND Code of Practice, 2015
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2021
- Behaviour and Discipline in Schools, January 2016
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying, July 2017

We aim, as 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. 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 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 improving the school's outside spaces, 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. Books with lots of examples and scenarios are used to promote discussions on being kind to one another and Grace & Courtesy groups are frequently done, to role model the correct behaviour and how to use the 'right' words in a variety of social situations.

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 their 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 both parties of the bullying.

Child who has been bullied is given the space to say how they would like incidents to be dealt with.



Children vary:

- Some like to talk to the child who did the bullying face to face with a teacher present
- Some like to have a member of staff deal directly with the child who did the bullying.
- 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 both the parties how they are on a regular basis.

Advice to the School community

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 the courageous thing to do. If you cannot tell anyone at school, you can tell you parents directly or in written, or write to your teacher. Younger children are encouraged to draw what they have experienced. 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 them. 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 themselves. 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 children at the school, children at other schools, or people not at school at all.

Children should not suffer in silence. Where a child 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 children are bullying off the premises
- Map safe routes to school, and tell children about them (software available from Map IT Ltd. Tel: 01487 813745)
- Talk to children about how to avoid or handle bullying outside the school premises

Sanctions - When tougher measures are needed

Where children do not respond to preventive strategies to combat bullying, the School will need to take tougher action to deal with persistent and violent bullying and the Lead Teacher will inform the Head of School for her to take a decision. 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 from playtime
- 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, permanently exclusion