Anti-Bullying Policy Policy

Mepal & Witcham Primary School a part of Ely Diocese Multi Academy Trust

Approved by the Governing Body: 26/11/25
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Anti–Bullying Policy

Based upon the Cambridgeshire PSHE Service model policy.

Section 1 Context including National and Local Policy and Legislation

This policy supports the vision of Cambridgeshire County Council and the Cambridgeshire Children and Young People's Services Anti–Bullying Strategy which is that 'everyone should have a right to live in an inclusive atmosphere, free from bullying and be treated with dignity. The health, wellbeing and emotional welfare of all children and young people are of paramount importance and should be treated as such.'

Protection from bullying and the right to attend education without fear is covered by a number of national legislative drivers and non–statutory guidance. In particular, The Education and Inspections Act (2006) requires every school to establish measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. The Equality Act (2010) requires schools to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation in relation to pupils who share a protected characteristic and therefore may be vulnerable to prejudice driven bullying.

This policy is consistent with the following national guidance:

> *DfE "Behaviour in Schools" guidance (2022)*
> *DfE "Preventing and Tackling Bullying" (latest version)*
> *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025*
> *Working Together to Safeguard Children (latest update)*
> *Online Safety guidance* (including cyberbullying and harmful online content).

Section 2 What is Bullying?
a) Our Shared Beliefs about Bullying

Bullying damages children's and young people's physical and mental health, including their self–confidence and ability to build and sustain relationships. It can also destroy self–esteem sometimes with devastating consequences and with the effects lasting into adult life. Bullying undermines the ability to concentrate and learn and can impact on children's and young people's chances of achieving their full potential at school and later in life. Bullying causes harm to those who bully, those who are bullied and those who observe bullying. This school believes that all children and young people have the right to learn and work in an environment where they feel safe and that is free from harassment and bullying. The purpose of this Policy is to communicate how the school aims to create a climate and school environment in which

everyone agrees that bullying is unacceptable and is committed to tackling it to improve outcomes for children and young people.

b) Definition of Bullying

At Mepal & Witcham Church of England Primary School we define bullying as:

Emotionally or physically harmful behaviour which is:

- Repetitive or persistent
- Intentionally harmful, carried out by an individual or a group
- Based on an imbalance of power leaving the person who is bullied feeling defenceless.

c) Bullying Forms and Types

Forms of Bullying

Bullying behaviour across all types of bullying can represent itself in a number of different forms. Children and young people can be bullied in ways that are:

Physical – by being punched, pushed or hurt; made to give up money or belongings; having property, clothes or belongings damaged; being forced to do something they don't want to do.

Verbal – by being teased in a nasty way; called gay (whether or not it's true); insulted about their race, religion or culture; called names in other ways or having offensive comments directed at them.

Indirect – by having nasty stories told about then; being left out, ignored or excluded from groups.

Electronic / 'cyberbullying' – via text message; via instant messenger services and social network sites; via email; and via images or videos posted on the internet or spread via mobile phones.

Specific Types of Bullying

The school recognises that although anyone can be bullied for almost any reason or difference, some children may be more vulnerable to bullying than others.

- Bullying related to race, religion or culture
- Bullying related to special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities
- Bullying related to being gifted or talented
- Bullying related to appearance or health conditions
- Bullying related to sexual orientation

- Bullying of young carers or looked–after children or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Sexist, sexual or transphobic bullying.
- Bullying related to gender identity or expression
- Transphobic bullying
- Bullying involving harmful sexual behaviour or sexual harassment
- Online harassment and cyberbullying, including via social media and gaming platforms Please refer to our Equality Policy Statement and Objectives

d) Recognising Signs and Symptoms

Mepal & Witcham Church of England Primary School is sensitive to the changes of behaviour that may indicate that a child is being bullied. Children who are being bullied may demonstrate physical, emotional and behavioural problems. The following physical signs and behaviour could indicate other problems but bullying will be considered as a possibility:

- Losing self-confidence and self-esteem
- Being frightened to say what's wrong
- Developing unexplained cuts, bruises and other injuries
- Unwilling to go to school and unusual patterns of non-attendance
- Failing to achieve potential in school work
- Becoming withdrawn, nervous and losing concentration
- Becoming isolated and disengaged from other children
- Developing changes in physical behaviour such as stammering and nervous ticks
- Having possessions go 'missing' or 'lost' including packed lunch and money
- Becoming easily distressed, disruptive or aggressive
- Developing problems with eating and food
- Running away
- Developing sleep problems and having nightmares 🎬 Developing suicidal thoughts or attempting suicide.

Where children are exhibiting signs of distress and changes in behaviour, the school will liaise with parents/carers and where appropriate, relevant health professionals and agencies.

Recognising Reasons Why Children May Bully

Mepal & Witcham Church of England Primary School recognises the fact that children may bully for a variety of reasons. Recognising why children bully supports the school in identifying children who are at risk of engaging with this type of behaviour. This enables the school to intervene at an early stage to prevent the likelihood of bullying occurring and to respond promptly to incidents of bullying as they occur. Understanding the emotional health and wellbeing of children who bully is key to selecting the right responsive strategies and to engaging the right external support.

Possible reasons why some children may engage in bullying include:

- Struggling to cope with a difficult personal situation e.g. bereavement, changes in family circumstances
- Liking the feeling of power and using bullying behaviour to get their own way
- Having a temperament that may be aggressive, quick tempered or jealous
- Having been abused or bullied in some way
- Feeling frustrated, insecure, inadequate, humiliated
- Finding it difficult to socialise and make friends
- Being unable to resist negative peer pressure

Section 3 – Implementing the Anti-Bullying Policy in our School

a) Introduction

This Anti-Bullying Policy is set within the wider context of the school's overall aims and values, our Positive Behaviour Policy, our Equality Policy Statement and Objectives and all safeguarding and child protection policies and guidance.

The school believes that providing a safe and happy place to learn is essential to promoting equality and diversity, ensuring the safety and well-being of all members of the school community and raising achievement and attendance.

All staff are expected to uphold a zero tolerance policy on bullying.

We expect every member of the Mepal & Witcham family to support our anti-bullying ethos.

**Stand Up
Speak Out
Say 'NO' to Bullying**

The school has allocated specific responsibility for anti-bullying work to the Headteacher and PSHCE Leader who will support the coordination of a whole school approach to managing this important issue. This leadership role on anti-bullying includes the following core elements:

- Analysing and evaluating data to inform policy development and practice.
- Co-ordinating anti-bullying curriculum opportunities
- Overseeing the effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying prevention and response strategies
- Supporting staff to implement the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and practice.

b) Policy Aims

This Policy aims to communicate the school's approach to involving the whole school community in developing and promoting a whole school anti-bullying ethos and culture. The Policy provides clear guidance on how the school intends:

- To raise the profile of bullying and the effect it has on children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing, life chances and achievement
- To make clear to everyone within our whole school community that no form of bullying is acceptable and to prevent, de-escalate and /or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour
- To encourage and equip the whole school community to report all incidents of bullying, including those who have experienced being bullied and bystanders who have witnessed an incident
- To respond quickly and effectively to incidents of bullying using a restorative approach and /or sanctions where necessary
- To apply reasonable and proportionate disciplinary sanctions to children causing the bullying
- To support children who are bullying in recognising the seriousness of their behaviour and to offer support and counselling to help them to readjust their behaviour
- To safeguard and offer support and comfort to children who have been bullied and provide longer term support where necessary to reduce the likelihood of negative effectives on their behaviour and self-esteem.
- To ensure all staff are trained and supported to enable them to model positive relationships
- To regularly monitor incidents of bullying and harassment and report to responsible bodies e.g. governors
- To provide a curriculum framework for Personal Social and Health Education that includes learning about bullying, diversity, discrimination and personal safety.
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c) Reporting Incidents of Bullying

The school encourages and equips the whole school community to report all incidents of bullying, including children who have experienced being bullied and bystanders who have witnessed an incident. The school endeavours to provide clear, accessible and confidential incident reporting systems, which include access to:

- Teaching and support staff who are trained in listening skills and anti-bullying issues.
- A Designated Person for Child Protection.
- Independent listeners/buddies (identified by the children themselves, including older pupils and adults other than class teachers) to whom children who are experiencing bullying may turn.

The school's definition of bullying and the systems it uses to monitor, intervene and respond to ant incidents of bullying are communicated to the whole school community via:

- Induction materials and the school's Home/School agreement.
- The Local Authority's anti-bullying leaflet for parents/carers.
- The school's website.
- The school's displays.
- The school's Collective Worship.

- The school's curriculum.
- Focus days and weeks, e.g. Friendship Week.
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d) Responding to Incidents of Bullying

The school has an agreed procedure for responding consistently to incidents or allegations of bullying. Direct action to respond to incidents of bullying occurs within a context, which reminds all children that bullying behaviour is unacceptable to the school and will not be tolerated. At our school, all children are encouraged to report incidents of bullying whether they have been bullied or have witnessed bullying. The school will investigate the incident and decide on an appropriate course of action.

When responding to incidents involving any type of bullying the school will consider the situation in relation to the school's Child Protection Policy and procedures. Statutory guidance on safeguarding children identifies 'Emotional Abuse' as featuring 'serious bullying causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger; or the exploitation or corruption of children'. In cases of severe or persistent bullying, staff will liaise with the Designated Person for Child Protection particularly where there are concerns that a child or young person may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm in terms of emotional abuse.

The school recognises that bullying can include peer-on-peer abuse, including sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour. All incidents will be recorded on CPOMS (or equivalent safeguarding system) and monitored regularly. Online bullying, including through social media, messaging apps, and gaming platforms, will be addressed using the same safeguarding principles.

The procedure and stages in responding effectively to bullying at our school are:

Monitoring and recording behaviour and relationship issues. The school follows a clear Positive Behaviour Policy, which expects challenging behaviour and relationship problems to be identified, recorded and addressed. It supports the detection of bullying and allows for intervention at an early stage and is reviewed weekly by the Headteacher to identify patterns and issues.

Making sure the person being bullied is safe and feels safe. When a child reports being bullied, the school will acknowledge their concerns and the incident will be taken seriously. Incidents of bullying reported by witnesses are treated in the same manner and will always lead to a conversation with the targeted child.

Establishing and recording what happened by listening to the targeted child. After listening to the views and feelings of the targeted child and their account of what has happened to them, the school will record the incident appropriately using our Behaviour Incident record on CPOMs.

Written records are factual and where opinions are offered these will be recorded word for word and noted as an opinion.

All children who are alleged to be involved in the incident(s) in any way at all will be spoken with so that a full, comprehensive picture of the incident is established.

Deciding upon a response. After listening to all of the accounts, the school will decide on an appropriate course of action and discuss this with those involved. All incidents of bullying will be responded to seriously and the behaviour of those who have been bullying will be challenged.

The school will analyse bullying data termly and report patterns and interventions to the governing body. Digital systems such as CPOMS will be used to track incidents and ensure timely follow-up.

Use of Sanctions

When an incidence of bullying is confirmed the school will consider appropriate sanctions. Sanctions will be applied fairly and proportionately in accordance with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy, taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that children may have and taking into consideration the needs of vulnerable children. Bullying by children with disabilities or SEN is no more acceptable than bullying by other children. However, for a sanction to be reasonable and lawful the school will take account of the nature of the children's disability or SEN and the extent to which they understand and are in control of what they are doing. Disciplinary sanctions are intended to:

- Impress on the perpetrator that what he/she has done is unacceptable
- Deter him/her from repeating that behaviour
- Signal to other children that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it.

The consequences of bullying should reflect the seriousness of the incident. The school takes verbal and indirect bullying as seriously as physical bullying. When deciding upon appropriate sanctions for bullying the school will ensure that the sanctions address bullying behaviour in a way which does not lead to an escalation of the behaviour but instead supports a resolution to the problem. Sanctions for bullying are intended to hold children to account for their behaviour and ensure that they face up to the harm they have caused and learn from it. They also provide an opportunity for the children to put right the harm they have caused.

The school will draw upon the school's Positive Behaviour Policy and apply sanctions which include:
- Removing/separating children from their learning group or class for a fixed period of time;
- Removing/excluding children from certain whole school activities or key points in the day e.g. break times/ lunchtimes;
- Withdrawing privileges, including extra-curricular events and visits; 🎬   Fixed term exclusion if appropriate.

Some children who have been subjected to bullying can be provoked into violent behaviour. Where an attack has been provoked, the school will view this behaviour differently from an unprovoked attack and will ensure that sanctions are proportionate to the circumstances. However, emphasis will always be placed on the importance of 'speaking out' and not on retaliation.

The sanction(s) which is implemented will be recorded on the Behaviour Incident Report on CPOMs.

Communicating with the whole school community. The school will communicate to the school community that the bullying has been taken seriously and has been responded to well. This will include talking to parents/carers at the earliest opportunity and regularly thereafter (see section E Working With Parents/Carers).

Monitoring and following up with all parties concerned, including parents/carers to ensure that the bullying has stopped. Part of the school's process of responding to an incident is to seek an agreement to meet at some point in the future to see whether the situation has been resolved or whether further work needs to take place. This will include evaluating the effectiveness of the follow up strategies that have been put in place to ensure that the bullying has stopped. The school does not assume that a situation requires no further attention simply because a child has made no further complaints. Where a problem has not been resolved to the satisfaction of all parties the follow up strategies will be reviewed and/or further advice sought.

Responding to incidents of cyberbullying. The school will follow the above procedures and will seek guidance on responding to different forms of cyberbullying via the Cambridgeshire Education Child Protection Service and The ICT Service.

Responding to incidents of bullying which occur off the school premises. The school recognises that bullying can and does happen outside school and in the community. Bullying is unacceptable wherever and whenever it happens. When an incident of bullying is reported and has occurred off the school site and out of school hours e.g. walking to and from school, the school will inform the child's parents, support the child and parents and take any action it can. The school is not directly responsible in these circumstances but will involve itself as much as is appropriate and always in the interests of the child who is being bullied.

e) Working with Parents/Carers

Where the school has become aware of a bullying situation, parents/carers of the child who is being bullied will be invited to the school to discuss their child's situation. The school will endeavour to involve parents/carers of children who have been bullied constructively at an early stage to support the process of working together to find ways of resolving the situation and bringing about reconciliation. The outcome of the meeting and agreed actions/response will be recorded by the school on Behaviour Incident Report on CPOMs. The school will work alongside those parents/carers whose children have been bullied to support them in developing their children's coping strategies and assertiveness skills where appropriate.

The school takes parents/carers reporting bullying seriously. Parents/carers are initially encouraged to refer their concerns to the class teacher who will take them to the Headteacher. Again, a record of the incident and the agreed actions/response made at the meeting will be recorded by the school and added to the school's Behaviour Incident Report on CPOMs. The school will discuss the possible responsive options with the parents/carers and the bullied child and agree a way forward.

The parents/carers of the perpetrator will be invited to the school to discuss their child's behaviour. The outcome of the meeting and agreed actions/responses will be recorded by the school on the school's Behaviour Incident Report on CPOMs. The school believes that a cooperative ethos is desirable when trying to reach a resolution that is effective and long lasting. Parents/carers of those causing the bullying will also have support to come to a balanced view of what is happening and appreciate their role in helping their children to learn about the consequences of their actions and adopt alternative ways of behaving.

The school ensures that staff and all parents/carers remain fully aware of the measures that have been put into place to prevent the occurrence of further incidents. Follow up appointments are made with parent/carers to share these agreed measures and to monitor their success in preventing further bullying.

f) Following Up / Supporting and Monitoring

After following the school's procedures for responding to an incident of bullying, the school will consider employing further longer term measures/strategies to minimise the risk of bullying occurring in the future and to ensure that children feel safe. Strategies include longer-term support for all parties including the person being bullied, bystanders and the person who has perpetrated the bullying. Many of the school's strategies include problem solving processes, which help to reveal and address underlying issues. Some strategies also form part of the school's anti-bullying preventative work. Our strategies include:

- Providing opportunities for Circle Time where children can explore the needs of their peers. These are planned sessions in which the teacher facilitates a safe and positive environment for children to take turns, if they choose to talk about an issue of concern. The whole group is encouraged to listen carefully and discuss ways to help the individual in a problem solving way.
- Accessing support from external agencies and professionals including educational psychologists, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Specialist Teaching Services, Race Equality and Diversity Services.
- Providing opportunities for children who have been bullied or are bullying to attend counselling and social skills groups to develop skills in assertiveness, listening, negotiating and empathy.
- Providing supportive and nurturing structures such as a 'Circle of Friends' for identified vulnerable individuals.

g) Prevention

The whole school community must always work together to reduce bullying as part of our efforts to promote a positive and inclusive whole school ethos and create a safe, healthy and stimulating environment. Alongside the school's responsive strategies for dealing with incidents of bullying, the school adopts, as part of our pastoral support system, a whole school approach to implementing proactive and preventative interventions to reduce bullying.

Preventative work includes teaching online safety and digital literacy as part of the statutory RSHE curriculum. Pupils will learn about respectful relationships, consent, and the risks of online harm, including cyberbullying.

These interventions are implemented at a school, class and individual level. Our approaches include:

- School leadership are vocal and firm in promoting an open and honest anti-bullying ethos
- Adopting positive behaviour management strategies encapsulated within the school
- Ethos as part of the school's Positive Behaviour Policy
- Implementing a whole school approach to the teaching of PSHE and Citizenship and the implementation of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning Programme, Zones of Regulation.
- Ensuring that the school's anti-bullying ethos is actively promoted in Collective
- Worship and other formal occasions, as well as displayed around the school
- Providing training on behaviour management and anti-bullying for all relevant staff including midday supervisors
- Providing regular Circle Time, enabling children to talk about their feelings and concerns in a safe environment and to enable them to share concerns about bullying
- Participating in the annual national Anti-Bullying Week (Friendship Week) and supporting learning on bullying though whole school activities, projects and campaigns
- Reviewing the development and supervision of the school inside and outside to ensure provision is safe, inclusive and supports children's emotional wellbeing.
- Providing social skills groups for vulnerable individuals and groups
- Through the cross year House system, allow children from different age groups to socialise and support each other
- Providing information on support agencies such as ChildLine, including telephone numbers for help lines and addresses for supportive websites
- Working in partnership with other schools/local authority services on anti-bullying initiatives

h) Delivering the Curriculum for Positive Relationships and AntiBullying in our school

The school acknowledges the role of the PSHE and Citizenship curriculum in preventative work on bullying. The PSHE and Citizenship curriculum supports the development of children's self-esteem and their emotional resilience and ability to empathise with others. The curriculum provides opportunities for children to learn and develop the skills to identify manage and challenge incidents of bullying as well as providing opportunities for children to learn about bullying in relation to the wider context of diversity and inclusion.

- The school adopts the Primary Cambridgeshire Personal Development Programme for PSHE and Citizenship in which learning related to bullying, diversity and difference is covered within themes such as Myself and My Relationships, Citizenship and Healthy and Safer Lifestyles
- The school is also implementing the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning Programme (SEAL) as part of the Cambridgeshire Personal Development Programme and Zones of Regulation
- The school recognises and participates in the national Anti-Bullying week (Friendship Week), which provides an annual intensive focussed week on the subject of recognising and combating bullying.

i) Children and Young People's Consultation and Participation

The school considers listening to the voices of children and actively seeking their views and opinions regarding bullying as an important part of our preventative work. The school regularly audits children's perceptions of behaviour and the way in which bullying is being addressed which includes, listening to children and ensuring they are given the opportunity to speak out, and have their voices heard on their experiences of bullying. Children are actively encouraged to participate in identifying both the problems and solutions to bullying; reviewing and developing the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and practice and engaging in initiatives to support an anti-bullying ethos in school.

j) Whole Staff Awareness and Training Opportunities

The school endeavours to ensure that teachers and other adults working with children are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to identify and address all types and forms of bullying effectively and safely. Training will include recognising the signs of bullying in children and how to identify vulnerable children who may be susceptible to being bullied or becoming actively involved in bullying and bullying type behaviour. Training for staff is provided to ensure that they feel competent and confident in appropriately challenging bullying. Training also provides staff with a clear understanding of the school's Policy and procedures on preventing and responding to incidents of bullying.

All staff are expected to uphold a zero tolerance policy on bullying.

The school's approach to anti-bullying work is included within induction programmes for new staff (including temporary and supply staff).

All staff receive annual safeguarding and anti-bullying training, which includes updates on online harms, peer-on-peer abuse, and sexual harassment. Training ensures staff can identify vulnerable pupils and respond effectively to incidents both in school and online.

k) Monitoring and Evaluating the Anti-Bullying Policy

The school's Anti-Bullying Policy and practice is regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure its effectiveness. This process includes reviewing the school's definition of bullying and identifying new types and forms of bullying as they emerge. The Policy review is coordinated by the Headteacher and the PSHCE Leader. It involves monitoring and evaluating antibullying preventative and responsive strategies to ensure the school's practice is effective and successful in fostering an ethos that inhibits bullying and promotes inclusion and respect for diversity. The review process involves collecting data on the prevalence of bullying at the school and gathering the views and different perceptions of the whole school community. The school regularly analyses behaviour records and records of bullying incidents to identify patterns of behaviour regarding individuals and groups of children, and places and times where bullying may be occurring.

The results of the review are used to inform areas for school development, which are included in the Improvement Plan and other appropriate actions plans.