



# MIDDLESTONE MOOR PRIMARY SCHOOL

## STATEMENT OF POLICY AND GUIDELINES TO COMBAT BULLYING

April 2016

## SCHOOL POLICY TO COMBAT BULLYING

### CONTEXT

At Middlestone Moor Primary School we promote a friendly, caring ethos across all areas of school life. Bullying is not a problem in our school however we acknowledge that from time to time a problem may arise which needs attention. Our policy outlines the methods we use to tackle any occurrence and also the ways in which we promote the social skills and empathy of our pupils to avoid problems ever starting.

### INTRODUCTION - Why combat Bullying?

" Research suggests that bullying not only causes considerable suffering to individual pupils but also has a damaging effect upon school atmosphere... It is hard to see how a school can win the confidence of it's pupils if it fails to deal with behaviour which so seriously damages the quality of their lives."

(Discipline in Schools - report of the Elton Committee)

" Bullying is probably the most underrated problem in our schools today. It involves some 1.5 million children and young people in both state and independent sectors in the U.K. It causes fear and distress in the victim and distracts from school work."

(Tattum and Herbert 1990)

The two quotes above give sound reasons why bullying, an action that takes place in all schools to a greater or lesser degree, should, and will be combated at Middlestone Moor Primary School.

We believe that bullying, whether between child and child, adult and child or adult and adult, is socially and morally unacceptable and can have a long-term damaging effect on both victim and bully.

We recognise that bullying is a major concern for many children, teachers and parents and that it can and does affect both school attendance and school performance.

### DEFINITION - What is bullying?

"the process of intimidating or mistreating somebody weaker or in a more vulnerable situation" (English Dictionary)

We may define bullying as the abuse of power by an individual or group.

It is the bully's intent and motivation to exert power over another in order to cause distress.

Bullying can be physical, sexual, verbal or psychological in nature.

It may occur frequently or infrequently, regularly or irregularly but it should be taken seriously, even if it has only occurred on a single occasion.

In more serious cases the abuse of power by an adult over a child, or by a child over a child may be viewed as child abuse and bullying should be seen within this context.

## **SCOPE**

This statement of policy refers to all children who attend Middlestone Moor Primary School. It should be considered within the context of our whole school policy on Discipline and Management of Behaviour. It should also be included within the Personal and Social Education programme of the school.

## **RATIONALE - Attitudes!**

Bullying is a very complex phenomenon which evokes a variety of responses. Many of these are unproductive and may go as far as contributing towards its continuation.

Some adults for instance still hold these views: -

- ◆ Bullying never did any real harm
- ◆ Bullying has always gone on and always will
- ◆ Bullying teaches you to stand on your own two feet
- ◆ Bullying makes a man of you.

If bullying is to be eliminated, attitudes such as those reflected by the above statements need to be addressed.

Some attitudes themselves will need addressing if bullying is to be tackled effectively. For instance: -

- ◆ if schools claim that bullying doesn't happen but take no steps to find if this is really the case,
- ◆ if children see adults as powerless to stop bullying and therefore do not report it,
- ◆ while it remains part of the pupil code that "telling" is reprehensible,
- ◆ when children view bullying as a normal but distressing part of school life that "has to be put up with",
- ◆ if children (and parents) view bullying as part of the ritual that takes place, especially when transferring to a higher phase,

- ◆ if parents hold the view that schools are ineffective at dealing with bullying.

## ENTITLEMENT

All children, without exception, at Middlestone Moor Primary School have the right to enjoy to the fullest possible extent the benefits of the educational provision that is offered. The right to enjoy being part of the life and work of the school is an essential part of achieving emotional health, maximizing individual achievement, feeling safe, making a positive contribution and eventually achieving economic well being. In order to make full use of these benefits the pupils at this school should expect to be educated in an environment which: -

- ◆ is safe and caring,
- ◆ provides challenges but is non-threatening,
- ◆ encourages children to feel secure,
- ◆ values children's opinions and involves them, where appropriate, in the determining of school policy and rules,
- ◆ shows an awareness of children's individual needs and attempts to meet these.

This school believes that if a child claims to have been bullied or is suspected of being bullied s/he is entitled to expect: -

- ◆ to be listened to in an appropriate setting and that every effort will be made to establish the facts,
- ◆ that appropriate action will be taken to address the child's concerns and an assurance that there will be no recurrence,
- ◆ that the action to be taken will be made clear to the child and if necessary to the parents.

This school also believes that if a child is suspected of bullying s/he is entitled to expect: -

- ◆ to be listened to in an appropriate setting and that every effort will be made to establish the facts,
- ◆ to be told what action the school can take (see GUIDELINES),
- „ to be told what action the school intends to take.

This school further believes that parents are entitled to expect that: -

- ◆ their child will be educated in an atmosphere which is safe and caring and is not characterised by violence and intimidation,
- ◆ the school will take all reasonable steps to prevent bullying occurring,
- ◆ any bullying incident which is reported will be investigated according to the school's guidelines,
- ◆ any bullying incident which is found to have taken place will be dealt with in line with the school's guidelines.

## **AIMS**

To raise the awareness of children, staff, parents and governors of Middlestone Moor Primary School that bullying is viewed seriously at this school,

To take steps to combat bullying,

To deal with bullying if and when it occurs,

To develop and keep under review a whole-school policy, with guidelines, concerning bullying, in conjunction with other related school policies,

To make clear to pupils, parents and staff the steps which will be taken when bullying is reported.

## **STAFF GUIDELINES TO COMBAT BULLYING**

**PREVENTION** - Obviously, it is better to stop bullying before it occurs so prevention is better than cure. This will also create a feeling of safety within the children.

In order to achieve this we can: -

- ◆ Use the curriculum to raise awareness. This could be carried out in: -
  - School assemblies
  - R.E. lessons
  - P.S.H.C.E. lessons
  - The "hidden Curriculum"
  - Parent handbook
  - Staff handbook

By discussing bullying we will be giving children, staff and parents opportunities to discuss the issue openly.

- ◆ Develop within the school an atmosphere of trust where children are able to tell and where adults will listen and believe.
- ◆ Make children aware that bullying is unacceptable, will not be tolerated and that every incident will be acted upon.
- ◆ Pinpoint the times in school where bullying is likely to occur and ensure a high priority of supervision. Times could be: -
  - before school begins
  - as school is closing
  - breaktimes
  - between activities
- ◆ Pinpoint the places in school where bullying is likely to occur and ensure adequate supervision here. Places could be - in the playground (corners, recesses etc)
  - in porch and toilet areas
  - in unsupervised work areas
  - when lining up
- ◆ Be aware of the most likely children to be victims but also be aware that anyone is a potential victim. The more vulnerable could be someone: -
  - new to the class or school
  - different in background, appearance or speech from other children
  - suffering from low self-esteem
  - more anxious or nervous than most
  - who give a "reaction" when bullied - i.e. loss of control, tantrums, crying
  - with special educational needs.

"Buddies" and "mini buds" are children we have trained to support pupils on the playground and look out for signs of bullying.

Our school ethos is firmly rooted in the Rights Respecting agenda and we strongly promote an agenda of mutual respect and tolerance.

The School Council is involved in making suggestions for action taken in school regarding preventing or dealing with bullying.

**ACTION** - We would like to think that our efforts to prevent bullying will do just that but of course, whatever we do, some bullying may still occur. However, when an incident is reported to you or you do come across bullying you should: -

- ◆ stay calm - you may add to the bully's sense of "fun" and give him/her control over the situation by any emotional outburst.

- ◆ take the incident or report seriously - however trivial it may seem at first sight.
- ◆ take immediate action - if this is at all possible, try not to allow the situation to wait.
- ◆ listen carefully to the facts offered by both the victim and the bully.
- ◆ decide whether your action needs to be public or private - being sensitive to the immediate needs of the victim.
- ◆ reassure the victim and try not to make him/her feel foolish or inadequate.
- ◆ reinforce the policy that they have done the correct thing by TELLING.
- ◆ offer concrete help, advice and support to the victim.
- ◆ make it clear to the bully that his/her actions are unacceptable.
- ◆ encourage the bully to see the victim's point of view,
- ◆ give punishment or sanctions against the bully - if this is felt to be necessary. Care is needed here as aggressive or punitive action may give the message that - if you are in power bullying is acceptable!
- ◆ explain in clear terms the punishment and the reason behind it.

**PUNISHMENT OR SANCTION?** - Staff attention is drawn to the school's policy on Discipline and Behaviour for a list of possible punishments and sanctions available for any incident of unacceptable behaviour, including bullying. Some of these are given below: -

- a quiet talk
- verbal chastisement
- loss of privileges
- written report by bully, victim and witnesses,
- letter to parents,
- exclusion (in serious cases)
- Child put onto a behaviour record sheet which is shared by parents.

NB. Any incident of bullying which is deemed to be potentially more than a single isolated incident will be kept on record in school. An ongoing record of incidents

relating both to the alleged bully and victim will be maintained confidentially but shared with parents, if deemed of a serious bullying nature.

## PUPIL/PARENT GUIDELINES TO COMBAT BULLYING

It has already been stated that pupils and parents need to be made aware that bullying will be viewed seriously at Middlestone Moor Primary School. To achieve this the following will be sent to the parents of all present pupils and will subsequently be added to the parent handbook to be given to the parents of all new pupils entering this school: -

In recent years a great deal has been said about bullying in schools. We would like prospective parents to understand that we take a firm stance against all forms of bullying. Through our commitment to rights and respect, bullying is not a problem in our school however included in the school's policy to combat bullying are the following guidelines that help to outline our commitment:

"We do realise that some bullying may occur in all schools. It can be a worrying, anxious time for families when children are afraid to attend school as a result of threats, intimidation or violence. However the staff and children of Middlestone Moor Primary School are committed to eliminating this anti-social behaviour and we will do all in our power to achieve this."

Please discuss this with your child and like us, try to encourage them to understand that when they come to this school no-one should bother, pester or harm them. Children also need to understand the difference between genuine bullying and just "falling out" with their friends. Children have the right to be happy at school and if they do encounter bullying they should get help by TELLING - parents, teachers, and friends, instead of keeping worries to themselves. If you suspect that your child is the victim of bullying we would urge you to tell a member of staff, personally or by telephone, so that the matter can be discussed. Following an incident being reported, the victim, bully and witnesses will be interviewed by a member of the teaching staff and then appropriate action will be taken. This will include informing parents of both victim and bully of the outcome, if felt necessary. If your child is established as committing bullying behaviour then we will need your support and co-operation in any action taken.

### CONCLUSION

We will never be sure that we can eradicate bullying completely within our school but we will use the guidance within this document so that everyone works together in a joint

approach to lessen its occurrence and **we will always act when bullying becomes apparent.**

April 2016

Reviewed at least every two years.

Next review date - April 2018