



MBIS Anti-Bullying Policy

Rationale

MBIS Mission Statement

'Learning for Life...'

MBIS provides students with the knowledge, skills and understanding that will empower them to be well-rounded, successful members of an ever changing, culturally diverse world community.

At MBIS we are committed to providing a happy, positive learning environment where children, teenagers and adults are:

- Successful independent and collaborative learners*
- Confident, cooperative team players and responsible leaders*
- Flexible, resourceful and resilient*
- Reflective, honest and trustworthy*
- Responsible, caring global citizens*

Introduction

To provide a caring, friendly and safe place for students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure environment it is clear that **bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated**. If bullying does occur, students and parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

This Anti-Bullying Policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy.

Aims

The aims of this Anti-Bullying Policy are:

- to ensure students and adults understand what bullying behaviour is.
- to support a positive, caring ethos where bullying is regarded as unacceptable so that a safe and secure environment is created for everyone to learn and work in.
- to ensure all members of the school recognise they have a responsibility to recognise bullying when it occurs and take appropriate action in accordance with this school policy.
- to ensure all incidents of bullying are dealt with in a consistent and effective manner
- to identify whole school initiatives to prevent bullying behaviours.
- to ensure that all adults (staff, parents, Board of Governors) know what the school policy is on bullying and what to do if it occurs
- to provide students and parents/guardians assurance that they will be supported, the matter fully investigated and appropriate actions taken - with a positive resolution.

What is bullying?

Bullying is any deliberate, hurtful, upsetting, frightening or threatening behaviour by an individual or a group towards other people. It is repeated over a period of time and it is very difficult for the victims to defend themselves (remember **STOP** – it happens: **Several Times On Purpose**). Bullying is mean and results in worry, fear, pain and distress to the victim/s.

Bullying can be:

- **Emotional** - being deliberately unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- **Physical** - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- **Verbal** - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing (orally or in writing)
- **Racist** - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- **Sexual** - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments

- **Homophobic** - because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- **Cyber** - electronically via phone calls, silent calls, text messages, websites, blogs, social networking websites, or photographs
- **An invasion of privacy** - *tampering with and/or damaging another student's property*
- **Against people with special educational needs and disabilities** - *because of, or focusing on the issue of mental or physical disability*
- **Against people from a particular religion** - *because of, or focusing on the issue of religion*
- **Against people from a particular culture** - *because of, or focusing on the issue of culture*

Bullying is not the *odd occasion* of falling out with friends, name-calling, arguments or when the occasional trick or joke is played on someone. It is bullying if it is done **several times on purpose**. Students sometimes fall out or say things because they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise it is not classed as bullying. It is an important part of student's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, the odd name-calling or childish prank. Learning how to deal with these situations and develop social skills to repair relationships is a part of growing up.

It is important for all adults to understand that real bullying does not have to be a normal part of childhood. All forms of bullying are harmful to the bully, the victim, and to witnesses. The effects can last well into adulthood.

Impact on Victims: Students who are bullied are at risk of the following:

- Anxiety
- Loneliness
- Low self-esteem
- Poor social self-competence
- Depression
- Psychosomatic symptoms
- Social withdrawal
- Physical health complaints

Impact on Bullies: Students who frequently bully are more likely to:

- Get into frequent fights
- Be injured in a fight
- Vandalize property
- Steal property
- Break the law

Impact on Bystanders, Witnesses: Students can be influenced indirectly by being witnesses to interpersonal violence. Witnessing others being victimized can significantly heighten feelings of vulnerability and lower feelings of personal safety.

Research has shown that the extent of bullying in schools is greatly underestimated. At MBIS we acknowledge that bullying does happen from time to time – it would be unrealistic to claim that it does not. When bullying does occur, everyone should be able to report this, and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively in accordance with our anti-bullying policy. MBIS is a *TELLING* school. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

A student may indicate by signs or behaviour that s/he is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a student:

- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins truanting
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
-
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions go "missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- has snacks or other foods continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (snacks or packed lunch have been eaten by somebody else)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other students or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated

In order to reduce incidents of bullying and recognise bullies, it is a fundamental responsibility of all staff at MBIS to watch for early signs of distress in students.

We listen, we evaluate, we act.

Dealing with Bullying

In dealing with cases of bullying, all staff at MBIS follow these fundamental guidelines:

- A secure environment should be provided in which incidents can be reported confidently
- All students should be shown that bullying is taken seriously
- Staff should respond calmly and consistently to incidents of bullying
- The school should protect and support all parties while the issues are resolved
- The person, who has done the bullying, and those who may have colluded, should be encouraged to behave in a more acceptable way
- Interventions should be monitored and followed-up appropriately at the individual, group or whole school level

In response to a report/suspicion of bullying, the Class Teacher/Form Tutor undertakes the following procedures. In more serious cases of bullying, the Principal will become involved, or initiate the investigation (See Level 6 of *School Systems for Dealing with Negative Behaviour – MBIS Positive Behaviour Policy*).

In all cases, a full investigation is carried out, with detailed records:

- The victim of the bullying is made to feel safe and that they are being listened to
- The nature of the bullying is discussed at length, with the recording of all facts
- The bully/bullies and any witnesses are identified
- Witnesses are interviewed individually
- The incident(s) is discussed with the alleged bully/ies. The allegations are made clear and the students are asked to tell the truth about the situation/incident. It is made clear that this is only an investigation at this stage
- If the bully admits to the act, he/she is made to understand that bullying is not acceptable at MBIS and the effect it has on the victim and the rest of the students in the class/school

- *Next Steps/Sanctions* relevant to the type of bullying are applied (see below). The parents of the victim and the bully are made aware. In more serious cases, the parents are called in separately to meet with the Class Teacher/Form Tutor
- If the allegation of bullying is denied, the investigation is taken further
- If there is insufficient evidence that bullying occurred, the incident is recorded and the students are monitored. All staff at school are informed through Phase/Staff Meetings
- If there is sufficient evidence that bullying occurred, relevant *Next Steps/Sanctions* are applied (see below). The parents of the victim and the bully are made aware. In more serious cases, the parents are called in separately to meet with the Class Teacher/Form Tutor and the Principal to discuss the situation and ensure that the bullying behaviour ends immediately

Next Steps/Sanctions

- In most cases, the bully(ies) will be asked to genuinely apologise and, wherever appropriate, write a letter to the victim to this effect
- If possible, the students will be reconciled
- An attempt will be made, and support given, to help the bully(ies) understand and change their behaviour. This will include a Behaviour Support Programme - developed by the Inclusion Leader - and opportunities in circle time or groups for the student/s to discuss relationships, feelings and the effect bullying can have on individuals. A mentor/named person will support the student during this programme.
- Sanctions for bullying may include:
 - removal from the group in class time
 - time spent out of class - under supervision of Heads of School or Principal
 - withdrawal of break privileges
 - withholding participation in any non-essential school enrichment activity (ASAs, school trip, sports event, etc)

- Hold separate discussions with the parents of the bully and the victim (see below)
- After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored - in class and at breaks - to ensure repeated bullying does not take place
- Bullying incidents will be discussed regularly at staff meetings
- The Principal will present termly reports to Governors on school events and will include any serious bullying incidents in these reports.

Meetings with Parents

It is essential to involve parents where serious bullying has taken place. The most effective emphasis in meetings with parents is on joint problem solving. The aim of such a meeting is to minimize the likelihood of further bullying regardless of whether one is talking about the student who has bullied or the student who has been bullied.

Careful planning will retain the joint problem-solving focus in the face of such an emotive subject. Staff will ensure that:

- parents are clear about the joint problem solving focus
- they have been given enough notice
- the meeting is informal but uninterrupted
- all relevant information is available
- parents have an opportunity to have their say and express their feelings about the situation
- the meeting is purposeful and ends on a positive note

In **more serious cases**, *Stage 1 of Formal Procedures* under the **MBIS Positive Behaviour Policy** will be initiated:

Formal Procedures

Stage 1 – On Report

A meeting is arranged with the student, the student's parents, the Form/Class Teacher and Head of School. The student's behaviour and strategies for improvement will be discussed. A *behaviour contract* will be developed. The student will then be put on a weekly report, for a minimum of 2 weeks and a maximum of 8 weeks, depending on the nature of the behaviour. It will be reviewed every 2 weeks.

The Inclusion Leader will be informed and the involvement of any outside agencies will be considered.

With no improvement, the next stage will be applied.

Stage 2 - Fixed Term Suspension

The School Governors will be informed. The Principal will communicate to the parents that the student will remain at home for a period not exceeding 5 days.

If - upon return to school - the student's behaviour improves, he/she will revert to Stage 1 procedures for a minimum of 4 weeks. If behaviour does not improve, the student will move to Stage 3,

Stage 3 - Removal from school

The School Governors will be informed. The Principal will communicate to the parents that the student may no longer remain at MBIS. Should the parent wish to appeal, they may write directly to the Chair of Governors. A response to the parents will be provided within 2 days.

Whole school strategies for the prevention and reduction of bullying

Whole school initiatives and proactive teaching strategies will be used throughout the school to develop a positive learning environment with the aim of reducing the opportunities for bullying to occur. These include:

- The proactive, dynamic development of the MBIS Personal Learning Goals
- Using praise and rewards to reinforce good behaviour
- Encouraging the whole school community to model appropriate behaviour towards one another
- Regular meaningful class discussion of the MBIS Key Values (PSHE and Form Time) in relation to anti-bullying
- Ensuring an 'anti-bullying' day as a high profile event each school year
- Awareness raising through regular anti-bullying/kindness/key values assemblies
- A PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) scheme of work from Reception to Year 11 used to support this policy
- Using curriculum opportunities to explore bullying (eg. history, literature, current affairs, etc)
- Class 'Circle Time/Form Time discussion' on bullying issues
- Developing student's **emotional literacy** by teaching them a wide vocabulary of words to describe their emotions. This enables them to express their feelings, helping them to resist attempts at bullying. Being able to understand and express emotions reduces conflict between students and makes them less inclined to misinterpret others' actions, which can be a factor in bullying.
- A 'Friendship Bench' in the playground for students who need a friend/someone to talk with – ('Bibo's Bench')
- Students being read stories about bullying
- Using drama activities and role-play to help students be more assertive and teach them strategies to help them deal with bullying situations
- Proactive break time duty by adults - with focus on times and places where bullying is most likely
- Organising annual anti-bullying training for all staff
- Undertaking annual questionnaires and surveys to monitor the extent of bullying in the school and the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

Role of Parents/Guardians

Parents/ Guardians have an important part to play in our Anti-Bullying Policy. We ask parents to:

- Look out for unusual behaviour in your children– for example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their usual standard.
- Always take an active role in your child’s education. Enquire how their day has gone, who they have spent their time with, etc.
- If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform school immediately. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.
- If a student has bullied your child, please do not approach that student on the playground or involve an older student to deal with the bully. Please inform school immediately.
- It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse!
- Tell your child that it is not their fault that they are being bullied.
- Reinforce the school’s policy concerning bullying and make sure your child is not afraid to ask for help.
- If you know your child is involved in bullying, please discuss the issues with them and inform school. The matter will be dealt with appropriately.

Equality and Diversity

Please refer to the MBIS Statement on Equality, and Racial and Cultural Diversity.

Monitoring and evaluation of the policy

- The Principal and Heads of School regularly discuss key matters at the SLT meeting each week.
- At regular Phase Meetings, the Teachers discuss matters of recorded/observed student behaviour.
- An annual student questionnaire contains questions designed to elicit student’s views on behaviour in school.
- The Principal monitors the effectiveness of this policy on a regular basis, reporting to the School Governors. He/she makes recommendations for further improvements as necessary.
- The School Governors reviews this policy every year. The Governors may review the policy earlier based on relevant changes in the UK, or if the Governors receive recommendations on how the policy might be improved.

Date of policy: January 2020

This policy was last reviewed in January 2024

Next Review: January 2025