

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

MHS takes a very serious view of bullying of any form whether direct or indirect. We will attend to bullying in any form if reported or observed and try to ensure it does not recur.

### **Responsibilities**

- The School will provide guidelines to the Staff for dealing with incidents of bullying
- The School staff is responsible for ensuring that all incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly following the guidelines provided.

We will ensure that children know that the school expects them to report incidents of bullying. They should not be afraid of doing so. They can report cases to any member of the Staff and each case will be attended to promptly and hopefully effectively.

### **Dealing with Bullying**

The bully must be left in no doubt that bullying is unacceptable and that her conduct will be systematically monitored. .

“Bullies” are most likely to change their behaviour when they are helped to see things from the victim’s perspective. They should feel social pressure from their peers rather than being subjected to harsh punishment from adults.

**The facts of each case will be validated before any step is taken**

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If there are several persons involved each of them must be interviewed *individually* to get the facts established.

Witnesses/ bystanders should also be interviewed, then the victim.

With the accused, begin “I would like to talk to you because I’ve heard you’ve been unkind to X..... What do you know about it?”

Accept no excuses, e.g. “I was only just playing /teasing....” Your response might be: “Did the victim enjoy it?”

Similarly, do not accept attempts to excuse the bullying by blaming the victim. “What did you do wrong?” and so on.

However, try to avoid a confrontational approach and instead seek sensitively to *reinforce any responses which reveal some concern for the victim.*

Consider asking the child to write down what happened.

### **Making amends (After half an hour)**

“OK – we’ve talked about this long enough.... What do you suggest we do now to help X? What can we do to put things right?”

The idea is not so much to punish the bully, but to encourage the culprit to carry out some corrective action to improve relationships.

Consider ways in which the bully can be encouraged to see things from the victim’s point of view, e.g.:

- Getting the bully to write a story about bullying from the victim’s point of view
- Group discussions with all involved to explore victim’s and bystanders feelings

The following may be considered:

- Apologising to victim – perhaps in writing.
- Listing the behaviour which needs changing, in order of priority
- Making a contract not to engage in this behaviour again (NB: ensure the victim’s agreement)
- Asking other people to monitor the situation and report any breaches of contract

“OK, that’s good. We’ll meet again in a week and you can tell me how you’ve been getting on.”

### **Follow up**

See perpetrator(s) and victim again a week later. Consider whether to see them separately or together as a group. If the problem still remains, it may be necessary to keep repeating “What shall we do? What do you suggest?” Make arrangements for further monitoring and further meetings, as appropriate.

### **SUPPORTING THE VICTIM**

The victim is often a child who lacks confidence. Certainly the child’s confidence will be damaged by the bullying.

Children need to know that staff will listen and will take reported incidents seriously. The staff will help the victim to make friends by pairing with another child in the group who can draw the victim into activities. The staff will help other children to value the victim so the victim’s confidence will develop.

### **Rules for Staff**

Incidents of bullying and the actions taken are recorded in the log book in the Principal’s PA’s office. Staff must see the Principal to inform him of the situation before entries are made.

The Principal will be brought in if the bullying is very serious. She will decide whether to involve parents and inform them of the school strategy for dealing with the problem. Members of staff must always discuss incidents with the Principal and not approach parents themselves.

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**Combating the problem of bullying:**

- Raising awareness of the problem and discussing with children an agreed list of unacceptable behaviour
- Promoting pro-social behaviour.
- Developing preventative strategies.
- Promoting strategies to protect and support the victims.
- Dealing effectively with incidents
- Regularly review the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Provide information and training for all members of staff to prevent bullying, manage incidents and create and maintain a culture of mutual respect free from bullying behaviour.

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