

# Marjory Kinnon School

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## Anti-bullying Policy

October 2024

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# Marjory Kinnon School - Anti-bullying Policy

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**Approved by the Teaching & Learning Committee: October 2024**

## 1. Introduction

At Marjory Kinnon School our Anti-bullying Policy reflects the expectations of positive pupil behaviour in all settings as made explicit in the school's Behaviour Policy. It also acknowledges the need for staff to understand 'bullying-like' or 'targeted' behaviour may be more to do with pupil's learning disability that prevents them from communicating how they feel; their difficulty in empathising with others; limited social skills or low self-esteem rather than a deliberate intention to 'harm' someone. The school always joins in the National Anti-bullying Week in the autumn term with assemblies and workshops on a given theme.

This policy aligns with national anti-bullying legislation and reflects the core values of our school, ensuring every child has the right to learn in a safe and supportive environment.

## 2. Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all children, regardless of ability, background, or personal circumstances, learn in a supportive, caring, and safe environment without fear of being bullied.

The aim of the Policy is to ensure that all children learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being 'bullied'. To facilitate, this most children receive clear, explicit and repeated teaching in PSHCE and life skills to help them understand what is socially acceptable behaviour and what is not, and to develop relationships with others. Throughout the school, children continually learn what are the positive ways to behave and begin to see how their actions have consequences for themselves and for others.

## 3. Understanding Bullying

Bullying is a subjective experience and can take many forms, making it difficult to define. Generally, it is understood as deliberately hurtful behaviour towards another child, repeated over time. Even when bullying is rare, the school has a **statutory duty** to respond to any behaviour perceived by a child as bullying if it makes them feel intimidated, anxious, or unsafe. It is important for staff to recognise the impact this perception could have on the child and to ensure their personal, social and emotional well-being is not affected. This will be addressed by the learning in the classroom, relevant small group interventions, parental support and ongoing observation and feedback from the pupil and support from the school's therapeutic practitioners.

All staff, governors and parents/carers need to be aware that difficult, negative behaviour shown by children with complex needs towards others and often misinterpreted as 'bullying' usually falls broadly into 3 types:

## 3.1 Types of Bullying

Bullying typically falls into the following categories:

- **Physical bullying:** Hitting, pinching, kicking, spitting, punching, pushing, biting, pulling hair, stealing, or damaging personal belongings.
- **Verbal bullying:** Name-calling, teasing, making racist or discriminatory remarks, and making comments about someone's appearance.
- **Psychological/Emotional bullying:** Excluding someone from a group, spreading rumours, not talking to someone, or tormenting and threatening.
- **Indirect bullying:** This involves **social exclusion** and **gossiping**, where the victim may be left out or isolated in social settings. It also includes passive-aggressive behaviours that may not be immediately obvious but are equally damaging.

## 3.2 Cyberbullying

In addition to face-to-face interactions, bullying may occur through **digital platforms**. **Cyberbullying** can involve the use of mobile phones, social media, and online messaging to send threatening, hurtful, or humiliating messages.

All staff must be vigilant for any signs of **cyberbullying** and report incidents directly to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** and the **Online Safety Officer**. The school takes a proactive approach by educating students about the responsible use of technology and the consequences of misusing online platforms to hurt others.

All staff, governors and parents need to be aware of the possible reasons why some children display socially unacceptable behaviour such as:

- Developmental delay resulting in low level of cognitive and social functioning.
- Attention seeking.
- Poor self-image.
- Frustration arising from inability to communicate.
- Learned behaviours, copying peers /adults.
- Difficulty in understanding that they are hurting others.

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- Adopting persona of character from TV/computer games or acting out images seen leading unintentionally to 'rough playing', difficulty in distinguishing fantasy from reality.
- Lack of role models at home.

All staff, and parents need to be aware of possible reasons why a child may occasionally display 'targeted' behaviour. For example:

- Changes in family circumstances.
- Out of sheer frustration, may uncharacteristically 'lash out' at another child when they feel that the behaviour of the perpetrator has not been adequately dealt with by adults.
- Discrepancy in boundaries imposed in school and at home.
- Encouragement from home to be assertive in a physically aggressive way/stand up for themselves.
- May be bullied at home and want others to feel bad as well.
- Due to a repeated reaction given in response to the targeted behaviour.

All staff should be aware of the signs and symptoms that indicate pupils feel unsafe in the presence of certain other children. For example:

- Reluctance to come to school, go into the playground.
- Want parents to bring them to school/collect them rather than go on the bus.
- Crying, mood swings.
- Bruises, marks on body.
- Wanting to go indoors at playtimes, going to the toilet frequently.
- Stay near adult or find secluded part of playground.
- Low self-esteem.

It is important that all staff behave as role models to help children learn to be kind and tolerant towards each other. Staff must avoid making sarcastic and derogatory comments and refrain from dominating and humiliating behaviour at all times. This also includes not encouraging children to retaliate in the same manner towards the perceived offender or use the term 'bully.'

## 4. Positive Strategies

**Positive strategies to encourage good behaviour in the classroom and in the playground so that children can work and play in an atmosphere of trust and co-operation.**

- School rules displayed in classrooms with symbols so children are constantly reminded of what kind of behaviour is clearly expected from them.
- Behaviour Support Plans to promote consistent approach by all staff when dealing with highly challenging and physical behaviours of some children.
- Children to be set achievable tasks/goals and given lots of praise and rewards to improve self-image.
- Effective classroom arrangement/seating positions; use of screens, workstations, individual schedules (TEACCH approach) to help focus children on work.
- Opportunities in PSHE / RSE curriculum for children to explore ways of developing better relationships with each other through circle time activities, discussions, role-play and assertiveness training. Use of PSHE / RSE resources designed specifically for children with Autism to help them understand social situations e.g. social stories.
- Extra responsibilities/movement breaks for children with short concentration spans.
- Good Work/Behaviour Assembly where considerate behaviour to others is publicly recognised.
- Improved playground supervision through the staggering of lunchtimes and deployment of staff on premises e.g. all areas of playground 'patrolled' and adults engaged in developing social and play skills.
- Zoning areas of playground for e.g. quiet play, team games, individual activities, bike track.
- Children to be free to play alone, in groups, and with support and have access to different areas of playground.
- Behaviour Support Plans or individual risk assessments to help some children manage their less structured time out on the playground.

## 5. Bullying Procedures

**Procedures for responding to incidents of negative behaviour.**

- If a bullying allegation is made by a parent or child, the SLT will initiate an investigation within 24-hours of the report and interview all parties and witnesses. This investigation is recorded on a bespoke Investigation of Bullying Behaviour Form and kept as a record.

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- When dealing with incidents all staff to remain calm and in control, keeping language simple, clear and appropriate.
- A range of motivators or planned strategies will be used throughout the day to support individual children.
- Thrive techniques are used for de-escalation to diffuse potentially 'explosive' situations when required.
- Class Teachers who know their pupils well are to judge how serious negative language or behaviour used is and how it affects others before applying sanctions. For instance, a younger child may swear not knowing what the words mean but may know such words provoke a reaction. In this case it may be beneficial to ignore it. On the other hand, the response to an older child who verbally abuses another child/adult may be to remove him/her from the situation depending on individuals and Behaviour Support Plan strategies if relevant.
- Any pupils with concerns around highly challenging behaviour will have a Behaviour Support Plan in place to ensure a consistent approach is used supporting the individual child.
- In the event of a child 'targeting' another individual, planned strategies will be used in an attempt to decrease the negative behaviour. Behaviour Management Strategies will vary depending on the perpetrators understanding and the cause of the negative behaviour.
- In some cases, individual children will be given 1:1 support to ensure the safety of themselves and other adults and pupils.
- **Any pupils who experience bullying would be given individual support and parents would be informed – staff would share strategies used in school to support the child's personal, social and emotional well-being.**
- **Class teachers and support staff will actively support students who experience bullying by ensuring they have an understanding of what is happening and why and to teach them a range of coping strategies, if appropriate. Staff would work to raise the self-esteem of the child to ensure the repeated behaviour does not affect their overall confidence, happiness or learning.**
- In the case of repeated or ongoing behaviour staff will record the incidents on the Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS) and seek support from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to attempt to gain a better understanding of the cause of a repeated behaviour. The CPOMS Report will then be used to plan further advice and support. The Investigation of Bullying Behaviour Form will also be completed by a

member of the SLT and sent to the Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher - Pastoral & Behaviour.

- Any repeated incidents around negative social interactions would be followed up in class through specific PSHE / RSE lessons.
- Social stories are used to further support pupils where appropriate.
- During pupils' transitions around the school including arrival and end of day routines, lunchtimes and assembly times, pupils are to be supported by class staff or known adults.
- In the event of an incident occurring where adults are unfamiliar with the individual child they will use positive behaviour strategies and Thrive de-escalation techniques if required to diffuse situations and will report back to the class staff.
- Depending on the needs of the children concerned the following sanctions to be applied when on the playground. (Staff to follow advice from class staff for individual children – advice shared frequently in briefings):
  - Verbal warning/reminder of rules – logged on CPOMS.
  - If behaviour persists child should be removed from main playground and given internal exclusions or access to supervised lunchtime clubs. All staff to log on CPOMS on spotting an incident of bullying.
- Class Teachers to record incidents, share information with colleagues and inform parents when appropriate.
- Parents of children with persistent negative behaviour to be asked to come to school to meet Class Teacher/SLT and discuss strategies that could improve behaviour – the CPOMS Report and BSPs can be used to support discussions.
- In the very unusual event of sustained and constant bullying, a pupil may be suspended from school either temporarily or permanently.

## 6. Recording & Monitoring

If there is a concern about a child or there is thought to be a pattern of incidents in relation to the child then the incidents are investigated. The Head of Department / Deputy Headteacher (DHT) or Assistant Headteacher (AHT) will raise an 'Investigation of Bullying Behaviour' Form (see Appendix A). The HoD / DHT / AHT will then review all evidence and make an appropriate recommendation.

The HoD / DHT / AHT is to keep the parents informed at each point in the investigation.



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The school will conduct regular reviews of all logged bullying incidents to identify patterns and address systemic issues.

The Governing Body Teaching & Learning Committee review and monitor incidents of bullying. Incidents of intentional and sustained bullying almost never happen due to the nature and abilities of the children.

## Appendix A: Investigation of Bullying Behaviour Form

Investigation of Bullying Behaviour			
Aggressor Name:		Victim/s Name:	
Reported By:		Department:	
Date	Incidents Summary	Types of Bullying Behaviour Racist (Direct) / Racist (Indirect) / Disability (Direct) / Disability (Indirect) / Homophobic (Direct) / Homophobic (Indirect) / Appearance (Direct) / Appearance (Indirect) / Verbal / Written / Physical	Evidence Y/N
Actions involving parents:			
Actions involving aggressor:			
HoD / DHT / AHT Signature(s):		Date:	