Anti-Bullying Policy

Key Document Details

1. **Introduction and Our Community**

Melksham Oak Community School (MOCS) is part of The White Horse Federation and are committed to providing students with a caring and safe environment within which individuality can flourish, allowing them, without hindrance, to live their lives to the full in as many spheres as possible. If a pupil feels safe at our school, they are in a much better position to realise positive outcomes. Everyone has the right to be treated with kindness and respect and to be properly supported if they are not. Bullying of any kind is deemed unacceptable and will always be taken seriously and acted upon.

We are a '**telling**' school; this means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff. We will uphold the ethos of the Bronze Award for the Anti Bullying Quality Mark that we are working towards.

Our Community:

- Monitors and reviews our Anti-bullying policy and practice on a regular basis.
- Supports staff to promote positive relationships to help prevent bullying.
- Is working towards the Bronze Anti-Bullying Quality Mark
- Recognises that some members of our community may be more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others; this may include children with SEND.
- Will intervene by identifying and tackling bullying behaviour appropriately and promptly.
- Ensures our pupils are aware that bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that everyone should feel safe to learn and abide by the anti-bullying policy.
- Requires all members of the community to work with the school to uphold this anti-bullying policy.
- Recognises the potential impact of bullying on the wider family of those affected so will work in partnership with parents/carers regarding all reported bullying concerns and will seek to keep them informed at all stages.
- Will deal promptly with grievances regarding the school's response to bullying, in line with our TWHF Complaints Policy.
- Seeks to learn from good anti-bullying practice elsewhere.
- Utilises support from the Local Authority and other relevant organisations when appropriate.

2. Aims

The aims of the policy are to:

- ensure a safe environment for all students at MOCS;
- emphasise the fundamental importance of establishing and maintaining a positive, caring ethos within the school;
- establish an atmosphere where bullying is regarded as unacceptable;
- to raise general awareness so that the whole school can play its part in recognising bullying and to act when it occurs by preventing or responding appropriately to it.

3. Objectives

The objectives of the policy are to:

- ensure that all students, parents/carers, staff, and Governors can recognise what bullying is, know what the policy is on bullying and what to do if it occurs.
- conduct staff and student training to maintain the high profile of the anti-bullying policy and to introduce new initiatives including the Bronze Anti-Bullying Quality Mark
- develop a student led approach to anti-bullying
- build understanding and discussion of anti-bullying and related topics into the PSHE programme.
- confirm frequently that students will always be supported if bullying is reported.
- ensure that whenever someone knows that bullying is happening, someone is told about it or something is done.
- work with other professional agencies when necessary to keep children safe.

4. Legislation

This policy has been written in accordance with the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children Act 2004
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- The Public Order Act 1986
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

5. Links with other policies

This policy should be read alongside the following Federation and Academy policies:

- Acceptable Use Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Principal

The Principal will ensure that:

- SLT and all staff are involved in the determining of the strategies and procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying;
- the policy is communicated to all staff, students and parents/carers;
- appropriate training is made available to all staff;
- when breaches of the policy are identified disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably.

6.2 Pastoral Lead

The Pastoral Lead as a member of SLT will

- Be responsible for the day-to-day management of the policy and systems;
- Ensure that the Principal is informed of all incidents;
- Ensure that there are positive strategies and procedures in place to support students that are bullied and those who have bullied;
- Determine the involvement of parents/carers in the solution of individual incidents.

6.3 Teaching and Support Staff

All staff will:

- Ensure that the Federation and school policies are implemented fairly and consistently across the school:
- Be aware of the procedures for dealing with reported incidents;
- Undertake training as directed by the Principal or Federation

Parents who are concerned that their child is being bullied at MOCS should:

- Talk to their child about what is happening;
- Be calm and show sensitivity;
- Reassure your child that MOCS will act on the information;
- Agree the next step with your child;
- Speak to your child's Pastoral Manager who will ensure that an investigation is undertaken;
- Maintain contact with the Pastoral Manager and Head of Year until the matter is resolved.

6.4 Students and Adults

Students should:

- Talk to their Pastoral Manager if they believe they are being subject to any form of bullying;
- Use the Help@melkshamoak.wilts.sch.uk email
- Speak with parents/carers to let them know what is happening;
- Accept help and support that is offered by the school;
- Speak with a Pastoral Manager should they witness any form of bullying in the school.

Supporting Adults

MOCS takes measures to prevent and tackle bullying among pupils; however, it is equally important to recognise that bullying of adults, including staff and parents, whether by pupils, parents or other staff members, is unacceptable. This is addressed in the staff Code of Conduct and Whistle-blowing procedures.

7. Definition of bullying

Bullying is "behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally". (DfE "Preventing and Tackling Bullying", July 2017)

Bullying can include name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; taking belongings; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

This includes the same unacceptable behaviours expressed online, sometimes called online or cyberbullying. This can include sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos.

Bullying can be a form of child on child abuse and can be emotionally abusive; it can cause severe and adverse effects on children's emotional development. It is persistent, targeted and consciously carried out.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

It is not bullying when:

- Students of about the same age and strength have the occasional quarrel or conflict
- A member of staff offers constructive or fair criticism of a student's behaviour or work performance

For the purposes of this policy, the term bullying encompasses harassment and sexual harassment, defined as follows:

Harassment: any form of unwanted conduct in relation to any of the nine grounds named in the equality legislation that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the victim.

Sexual harassment: any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the victim.

All members of the school community, including external facilitators, are subject to this code, particularly the following relationships:

- Student to Student.
- Student to any Staff member.
- Staff member to Student.
- Parent to Staff member.
- Staff member to Parent.
- Staff member to Staff member.

8. Types of bullying

Cyber bullying: a relatively recent phenomenon. Through e-mail, instant messaging, internet chat rooms and electronic gadgets such as camera cell phones, cyber bullies forward and spread hurtful messages and/or images. Bullies can use this technology to harass victims at all hours. Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, any person who sends an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender, is guilty of an offence if their purpose in sending it was to cause distress or anxiety to the recipient.

Emotional bullying: this can be subtler and can involve isolating or excluding a child from activities. For example, shunning the victim at lunchtime or on a school outing. This type of bullying is especially common among girls.

Physical bullying: this form of bullying can accompany verbal bullying and involves such things as kicking, hitting, biting, pinching, hair pulling, or the threat of physical bullying.

Racist bullying: this form of bullying involves racial jokes, racial name-calling, offensive gestures or inappropriate comments.

Bullying related to special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities: Children and young people with SEN and disabilities are more at risk of bullying than their peers. Public bodies have new responsibilities to actively promote equality of opportunity for all disabled people and eliminate disability-related harassment. Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, whether in mainstream or special schools, do not always have the levels of social confidence and competence and the robust friendship bonds that can protect against bullying.

Sexual bullying: this involves unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments. This includes homophobic bullying. This is bullying behaviour that has a specific sexual dimension or a sexual dynamic, and it may be physical, verbal or non-verbal/psychological. It is also underpinned by sexual attitudes or gender stereotypes. Sexual bullying can be seen as sexual harassment in schools. Behaviours may involve sexual comments or innuendo, including offensive comments about sexual reputation; or using language that is designed to subordinate, humiliate or intimidate.

Sexist bullying: this is bullying based on sexual attitudes that when expressed demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. These attitudes are commonly based around the assumption that women are subordinate to men, or inferior. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.

Homophobic bullying is when people behave or speak in a way which makes someone feel bullied because of their actual or perceived sexuality. People may be a target of this type of bullying because of their appearance, behaviour, physical traits or because they have friends or family who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning or possibly just because they are seen as being different. Evidence of homophobic bullying suggests that children and young people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered face a higher risk of victimisation than their peers. People do not have to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender to suffer homophobic bullying. This bullying has wider implications on family, friends and others perceived to be from that same group. It is often based on gender stereotyping.

Transphobic bullying: this bullying stems from a hatred or fear of people who are transgender, which is an umbrella term that describes people whose sense of their own gender identity is seen as different to typical gender norms. Transgender people feel that their biological body is not aligned with their inner sense of gender identity. Transphobic bullying is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes. Boys and girls may be equally affected.

Verbal bullying: this usually involves name-calling, incessant mocking, and laughing at someone else's expense and can take many forms and be common to all bullying types.

Bullying related to appearance or health conditions: Those with health or visible medical conditions, such as eczema, may be more likely than their peers to become targets for bullying behaviour. Perceived physical limitations, such as size and weight and other body image issues can result in bullying.

Bullying of young carers, looked after children or bullying related to a child's home circumstances. Children may be made vulnerable to bullying by the fact that they provide care to someone in their family with an illness, disability, mental health or substance misuse problem. Young carers may be taking on practical and emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult. Research has highlighted the difficulties young carers face, including risks of ill-health, stress and tiredness, especially when they care through the night. Many feel bullied or isolated. Children in care may also be vulnerable to bullying for a variety of reasons, such as they're not living with their birth parents or because they have fallen behind in their studies. Some students are heavily influenced by their communities or homes where bullying and abuse may be common. Some bullying at school may arise from trauma or instability at home related to issues of domestic violence or bereavement or from the experience of being part of a refugee family. Siblings of vulnerable children may themselves be the subject of bullying by association.

9. Identifying signs of bullying

The behaviour of children, young people and adults is not easily understood. Changes in behaviour may have many causes. Being bullied can be one reason why behaviour changes and there is a need to be alert to the possibility that this may be the case. Students who are being bullied may:

- Become withdrawn, clingy, moody, aggressive and uncooperative;
- Behave in immature ways;
- Have sleep or appetite problems;
- Have difficulty concentrating;
- Show variation in academic performance;
- Have cuts, bruises, aches, and pains without adequate explanation;
- Request extra money or start stealing;
- Have clothes or possessions that are frequently lost or damaged;
- Complain of illness more frequently;
- Show a marked change in a well-established pattern or behaviour e.g. sudden loss of interest in activities, changing times of coming and going from home, reluctance to leave home, a request to change school, a refusal to return to a place or activity, experimenting with drugs or alcohol.

10. Responding to incidents of bullying

The following steps may be taken when dealing with all incidents of bullying reported to the school:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached or witnessed the concern.
- The school will provide appropriate support for the person being bullied – making sure they are not at risk of immediate harm and will involve them in any decision-making, as appropriate.
- A member of the pastoral team will interview all parties involved.
- The student who bullies others however will need careful counselling on reasons for bullying, aspects and consequences of this sort of anti-social behaviour.
- The designated safeguarding lead will be informed of all bullying issues where there are safeguarding concerns.
- The school will inform other staff members, and parents/carers, where appropriate.

- Sanctions (as identified within the Behaviour Policy) and support for individuals will be implemented as appropriate.
- If necessary, other agencies may be consulted or involved, such as: the police (if a criminal offence has been committed) or other local services including early help or children's social care (if a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm).
- Where the bullying takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including cyberbullying), the school will ensure that the concern is fully investigated. Appropriate action will be taken, including providing support and implementing sanctions in the school in accordance with the School's Behaviour Policy.
- A clear and precise account of the incident will be recorded using our CPOMS safeguarding recording system. This will include recording appropriate details regarding decisions and action taken.

11. Cyberbullying

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the school will:

- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.
- Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.
- Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation.
- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include:
- looking at use of the school systems;
- identifying and interviewing possible witnesses;
- Contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary.
- Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation. This may include:
- Support reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content.
- Confiscating and searching pupils' electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law and the school's Behaviour Policy.
- Requesting the deletion of locally held content and content posted online if they contravene school policies.
- Ensure that sanctions are applied to the person responsible for the cyberbullying; the school will take steps to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any additional help that they may need.
- Provide information to staff and pupils regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online. This may include:
- helping those involved to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain.

12. Supporting students

The school will support students who have been subject to bullying by:

- Reassuring the pupil and providing continuous support.
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their teacher, their pastoral lead, the designated safeguarding lead, or a member of staff of their choice.
- Being advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how respond to concerns and build resilience as appropriate.
- Working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- Providing ongoing support; this may include working and speaking with staff, offering formal counselling and engaging with parents and carers.

- Where necessary, working with the wider school community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this could include support through Early Help or Specialist Children's Services, or support through Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Students who have perpetrated the bullying will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened, establishing the concern and the need to change.
- Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child.
- Providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions.
- If online, requesting that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to service provider.
- Sanctioning, in line with the school's behaviour policy; this may include official warnings, detentions, removal of privileges (including online access when encountering cyberbullying concerns), and fixed-term or permanent exclusions.
- Where necessary, working with the wider school community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this may include involvement from the Police or referrals to Early Help, Specialist Children's Services, or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) as appropriate.

13. Preventing bullying

The ethos of the school will actively discourage and challenge all bullying types.

We will work together as a community to always tackle bullying head on and keep its profile high.

We will routinely access and respond to student voice.

We will:

- Create and support an inclusive environment which promotes a culture of mutual respect, consideration and care for others, which will be upheld by all.
- Embrace the ethos of the Bronze Award Anti Bullying Quality Mark
- Monitor and respond to alerts on the Help@melkshamoak.wilts.sch.uk email

- Recognise that bullying can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the school, including adults and children (child on child abuse).
- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as: religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference. Also, children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities.
- Challenge practice and language which does not uphold the values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect towards others.
- Be encouraged to use technology, especially mobile phones and social media positively and responsibly.
- Work with staff, the wider school community and outside agencies to prevent and tackle concerns including all forms of prejudice-driven bullying.
- Actively create "safe spaces" for vulnerable children and young people.
- Celebrate success and achievements to promote and build a positive school ethos.
- Address and educate through assemblies, the tutor programme and PSHE.
- Keep the anti-bullying agenda will have a high profile throughout the year, reinforced through key opportunities such as anti-bullying week and transition
- Be vigilant on duty and in lessons
- Promote positive role models and positive pupil/staff relationships
- Encourage parents to check their child's phone and social media accounts regularly. Remember that pupils of a certain age should not have access to most social media applications-NSPCC guidance should be followed.
- Encourage parents to support consequences and/or follow advice given by the school, in line with our behaviour policy
- Encourage parents to keep sending their children to school when bullying is being investigated

14. Education and training

The school will:

- Train all staff using face to face sessions, through the weekly safeguarding bulletin and the Bronze Award Anti Bullying Quality Mark training, including: teaching staff, support staff (e.g. administration staff, lunchtime support staff and site support staff) and pastoral staff, to identify all forms of bullying and take appropriate action, following the school's policy and procedures (including recording and reporting incidents).
- Consider a range of opportunities and approaches for addressing bullying throughout the curriculum and other activities, such as: through displays, assemblies, peer support, the student council.
- Provide systematic opportunities to develop students' social and emotional skills, including building their resilience and self-esteem.

15. Involvement of our community

Pupils:

We will:

- Involve pupils in policy writing and decision making, to ensure that they understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they play in preventing bullying.
- Regularly canvas children and young people's views on the extent and nature of bullying.

- Ensure that all pupils know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying.
- Ensure that all pupils are aware of the range of sanctions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying.
- Involve pupils in anti-bullying campaigns at a national and international level, as well as embedding messages in the wider curriculum
- Utilise pupil voice in providing pupil-led education and support.
- Publicise the details of internal support, as well as external helplines and websites.
- Offer support to pupils who have been bullied and to those who are bullying to address the problems they have.

Parents and carers:

We will:

- Take steps to involve parents and carers in develop policies and procedures, to ensure they are aware that MOCS does not tolerate any form of bullying.

- Make sure that key information about bullying (including policies, named points of contact and support from partner agencies) is available to parents/carers in a variety of formats, including via the school website.

- Ensure all parents/carers know who to contact if they are worried about bullying and where to access independent advice.

- Work with all parents/carers and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying.

- Encourage parents to work with the school to role model positive behaviour for pupils, both on and offline.

- Ensure all parents/carers know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively, to raise concerns in an appropriate manner.

16. Monitoring and review: putting policy into practice

The school will ensure that they regularly monitor and evaluate mechanisms to ensure that the policy is being consistently applied.
- Any issues identified will be incorporated into MOCS's development planning.
- The Principal will be informed of bullying concerns, as appropriate.
- The Pastoral Lead will report on a regular basis to the Local Governing Body on incidents of bullying, including outcomes.

17. Useful links and supporting organisations

- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Childline: www.childline.org.uk
- Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
- MindEd: www.minded.org.uk

- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- The BIG Award: www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk/index.php
- PSHE Association: www.pshe-association.org.uk
- Restorative Justice Council: www.restorativejustice.org.uk
- The Diana Award: www.diana-award.org.uk
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- Young Carers: www.youngcarers.net
- The Restorative Justice Council: www.restorativejustice.org.uk/restorative-practice-schools

SEND
- Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
- Anti-Bullying Alliance Cyberbullying and children and young people with SEN and disabilities:
- www.cafamily.org.uk/media/750755/cyberbullying_and_send_-_module_final.pdf
- DfE: SEND code of practice: www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25

Cyberbullying
- ChildNet International: www.childnet.com
- Digizen: www.digizen.org
- Internet Watch Foundation: www.iwf.org.uk
- Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk

Race, religion and nationality
- Anne Frank Trust: www.annefrank.org.uk
- Kick it Out: www.kickitout.org
- Report it: www.report-it.org.uk
- Stop Hate: www.stophateuk.org
- Tell Mama:www.tellmamauk.org
- Educate against Hate: www.educateagainsthate.com/
- Show Racism the Red Card: www.srtrc.org/educational

LGBT
- Barnardo's LGBT Hub: www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_work/lgbtq.htm
- Metro Charity: www.metrocentreonline.org
- EACH: www.eachaction.org.uk
- Proud Trust: www.theproudtrust.org
- Schools Out: www.schools-out.org.uk
- Stonewall: www.stonewall.org.uk

Sexual harassment and sexual bullying

- Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAW) www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk
- A Guide for Schools:
  www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/data/files/resources/71/EVAWCoalition-Schools-Guide.pdf
- Disrespect No Body: www.gov.uk/government/publications/disrespect-nobody-campaign-posters
- Anti-bullying Alliance: advice for school staff and professionals about developing effective anti-bullying practice in relation to sexual bullying: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-aboutbullying/sexual-and-gender-related

Note: Additional links can be found in 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2017) www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying