

# Mapledown Anti-Bullying Policy

## **Background**

Mapledown School is a special school which provides education for children with severe learning disabilities (SLD) including autism spectrum disorders (ASD), profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) and complex needs (CN), aged 11 to 19 years.

This policy sets out the procedures for dealing with bullying and has been written with reference to Safe to Learn – Bullying of Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – Embedding Anti-Bullying work in School (2008).

This policy should be read with the Mapledown School Behaviour Management Policy.

## **Policy**

The nature of their disability means that children with SLD and associated needs may not have sufficient understanding or awareness that certain behaviours directed towards others may be undesirable or that they might be construed as bullying. Similarly, those children who are the recipients of such behaviours may be unable to express or communicate their aversion to and also to respond appropriately to instances of bullying behaviours.

## **Ethos**

Mapledown School aims to support and teach skills to increase desirable behaviours through the development of key personal and bespoke positive behaviour plans.

## **Aims**

To ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied; and to promote consistency of approach and create an environment in which all types of bullying are considered unacceptable. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

## **Section Two**

### **Defining Bullying Behaviours**

The Department for Children, Schools and Families publication Safe to Learn – Bullying of Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – Embedding Anti-Bullying work in School. (2008) describe bullying as 'Behaviour by an individual or a group usually repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'. Bullying behaviour which may occur in school usually has common features including:

- It is deliberate, hurtful behaviour;
- It is repeated, often over a period of time;
- It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves;
- It is often aimed at certain groups because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation; and that it causes feelings of distress, fear, loneliness and lack of confidence in those that are at the receiving end and that there are four main types of bullying behaviour:
  - Physical: hitting, kicking, pushing, taking belongings.
  - Verbal: name-calling, insulting, racist or discriminatory remarks attributed to gender or sexual orientation.
  - Indirect: spreading nasty stories or rumours; excluding from groups, being

ignored, intimidation or threatening behaviour.

- Cyberbullying: using IT particularly the internet and mobile phones, to deliberately upset someone.

### **The Behaviours of Children with SLD and the Characteristics of Bullying Behaviours**

The children attending Mapledown School have a diagnosis of SLD and associated needs. This means that they are likely to have a limited ability to comprehend that they may be engaging in activities which have the characteristics of bullying behaviour. They are likely to be unaware that certain behaviours are socially unacceptable.

It is possible that one child may develop an obsession with another child or display challenging/undesirable behaviours towards others through high anxiety levels. These may manifest in potentially harmful behaviours such as kicking, pinching, hitting or throwing objects.

Staff have a duty to be vigilant to these behaviours and the fear/anxiety that the 'target' child may have. Incidents of such behaviour with or without intent are recorded in the class held behaviour record charts or in the accident book in each class if an injury to another student has occurred. The Deputy Head reviews the behaviour records and accident each fortnight.

It is important that this information must be shared amongst all members of the class team, and other members of staff as soon as possible.

As the DFE anti-bullying guidance notes, children with special educational needs and disabilities may not be able to articulate their experiences.

### **Positive Behaviour Support**

Detailed observations will be made of the outcomes of the behaviours and links made to establishing possible functions. This information will then be used to identify appropriate strategies to support the development of desirable behaviours. From this bespoke Positive Behaviour Plans will be developed and shared with all appropriate staff involved with the child/children. The possible functions of the behaviour may include:

- Attention (from the child or from an adult)
- Task avoidance (the child may not want to complete the work or demands)
- Reinforcement (the child is reinforced by the sensory input)
- Access to a tangible object (i.e. snatching a toy from another child)

Mapledown School curriculum will underpin the social skills taught through KPLTs and the PSHE curriculum which support the development of an ethos of co-operation and respect for all. Activities to develop social and emotional literacy skills will be taught through PSHE via the New Horizons curriculum and language and communication sessions.

Staff are important role models for the children. The behaviour of adults towards each other and towards the children is a potentially highly effective tool for preventing and for decreasing bullying behaviours.

It is important to support the child who is the target of the bullying behaviour, particularly as they may have difficulty communicating about their experiences.

Opportunities will be created for the child to communicate with adults how they may be feeling through the use of their preferred communication systems (PECs, Makaton signing, symbol books). Social stories may also support the child's understanding of the situation and associated emotions.

### **Section Three**

#### Reporting & Recording

Following an incident of unacceptable behaviour, staff must report and record using the in class behaviour record sheets and the accident book. All incidents must be reported immediately to a member of SLT.

#### Monitoring

- SLT will formally monitor incidents of bullying each term.
- Positive Behaviour Support strategies and Positive Behaviour Plans will be under constant informal review within class teams.
- Monitoring information will be reported to school governors each term.

#### Links with Other Mapledown Policies

- Behaviour Management Policy
- Child Protection / Safeguarding Policy

#### Reference List

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) "Safe to Learn – Bullying of Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – Embedding Anti-Bullying work in School"

DfE (2011) Research Brief: "The Use and Effectiveness of Anti-Bullying Strategies in School"

DfE (2014) "Preventing and Tackling Bullying"

GOV.UK (2017) "Bullying at School"

This update - November 2019.

This policy will be reviewed annually