

Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy reflects key statutory guidance, including **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE)** and **Working Together to Keep Children Safe in Education**

Document Control

Version Number:	6
Applicable To:	All Academies
Committee:	Executive
Approved By Executive Board in:	December 2025
Review Cycle:	Two Years
Date of Next Review:	December 2027
Related Policies:	DfE School Suspension & Permanent Exclusion Guidance Aug 2024 DfE Guidance on Gender Questioning Children DfE Guidance on Preventing & Tackling Bullying July 2017 Meridian Trust E Safety Policy & Acceptable Use Policy Meridian Trust Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy Meridian Trust Special Educational Needs Policy Meridian Trust Sex and Relationship Education Policy (primary / secondary phase) Academy Behaviour: Rewards & Sanctions Policy Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) Working Together to Keep Children Safe in Education

Revisions

Version	Page	Description of Change	Approved
6	3	Update to linked policies & documents	November 2025
6	4 & 7-8 Appendix A	Addition of reference to use of deepfakes images and voice cloning under cyber bullying	November 2025

Contents

REF	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
1	Purpose	3
2	Principles	3
3	Definition of Bullying	3
4	Why are Children Bullied	5
5	Roles & Responsibilities	5
6	Anti-Bullying Charter	6
Appendix A	Useful Links for information and support	7-8

1 Purpose

Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It also affects those other children who watch, and less aggressive students can be drawn in by group pressure. Bullying is not an inevitable part of school life or a necessary part of growing up. It is clear that certain jokes, insults, threatening behaviour, written abuse and violence are to be found in our society. No one person or group, whether staff or student, should have to accept this type of behaviour. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed, will a child be best able to benefit from the opportunities available at the school.

The Academy is completely opposed to bullying and will not tolerate it. Bullying is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work and live by. All members of the school community have a right to work in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment. As such, everyone has a responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the well-being of all students and all staff have a duty of care to ensure our students are protected from harm, and this includes bullying.

"It is important that the school or college do everything they reasonably can to protect the victim from bullying and harassment as a result of any report they have made."

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022

2 Principles

We will:

- Adopt a definition of bullying that is agreed across the Meridian Trust family of Academies.
- Have a consistent approach to any bullying incidents that occur.
- Raise awareness of bullying and promote positive relationships based on mutual respect.
- Seek to involve all stakeholders in the implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- Promote positive action to prevent bullying through our PSHE and pastoral programme, related activities and through curriculum opportunities.
- Provide support for all members of the Academy community that may be involved in dealing with an incident of bullying.
- Provide appropriate training for both staff and students to support the implementation of the policy across the Academy.
- Ensure fair treatment for all, regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, religion or sexuality, and encourage understanding and tolerance of different social, religious and cultural backgrounds.
- Pay due regard for those students with SENDV who may be at higher risk of peer group isolation and can suffer a disproportionate impact of bullying. Students with SENDV may have difficulties with communication and it is important that staff are aware of changes to behaviour or mood. Injuries may not be consistent with their SENDV but could be related to incidents of abuse or bullying.

3 Definition of bullying

There may sometimes be misunderstanding about the meaning of the term 'bullying'. One-off incidents, whilst they may be very serious and must always be dealt with, do not fall within the definition of 'bullying'.

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities.

It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.”
[Preventing and tackling bullying DfE](#)

We define bullying as **persistent or repeated, deliberate attempt to hurt or humiliate someone.**
 Or STOP

S Several (more than one incident)
T Times
O On
P Purpose (as opposed to a spontaneous argument)

There are various types of bullying, but most have three things in common:

- It is deliberately hurtful behaviour.
- It is repeated over time.
- There is an imbalance of power, which makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour. It can be:

Verbal	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, harassment, insults
Emotional	Being unfriendly, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures or actions). Inappropriate 'looks' or body language designed to intimidate or exclude from groups, games or activities. Body shaming.
Physical	Pushing, kicking, shaking, biting, hitting, punching or any use of violence that may cause physical harm. Unwanted physical contact including an 'invasion of personal space', This includes the threat of violence or the encouragement of physical harm towards another. Destruction of personal property.
Prejudiced	Racial / sexual / homophobic taunts, graffiti, gestures, comments on identity / culture / beliefs. Unwanted physical contact or threats / harassment
Sexual	Unwanted physical contact, sexual harassment or sexual comments, remarks, jokes. Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent including forcing someone to strip or touch themselves sexually. Rating appearance and derogatory remarks. Upskirting designed to obtain images of buttocks or genitalia which can cause distress, alarm or humiliation. In extreme cases, rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault / violence.
Cyberbullying	All areas of internet use such as email, social media and internet misuse and misuse of associated technology; i.e. phone, camera and video facilities. This may include impersonating a victim, creation of deepfake images or voice cloning, spreading gossip threats by text messaging and calls, sharing of consensual or non-consensual nude or semi-nude images, sexting or youth produced sexual imagery. Trolling, excluding the victim online and/or continually targeting someone in an online game
Hazing	Or initiation rituals which may involve harassment, abuse or humiliation, this can be online or in person

Covert	Attempted behind the victims back, often aiming to damage the victim's reputation and can include creating rumours, mimicking and humiliation. This is the most frequent form of bullying.
Alienation	Encouragement of peers to alienate the victim and treating the victim like an outcast. This so-called "pack mentality" is most frequently seen in secondary settings but can be evident at any age.

4 Why are Children Bullied?

A [Ditch the Label](#) report identifies that the main reasons children and young people believe they were bullied was because of their:

- appearance;
- interests / hobbies;
- doing well / not doing well in school;
- mannerisms;
- religious beliefs;
- gender / gender identity;
- poverty or wealth;
- family issues being made public;
- race / ethnicity;
- disability / additional needs;
- sexual

5 Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of every member of the school community to work together to combat and, hopefully in time, to eradicate bullying.

The Principal is ultimately responsible for the well-being of all students and staff. All staff, students, parents and academy councillors should be made aware of the policy alongside awareness being raised of the issues associated with bullying in the Academy.

Staff

All staff will:

- Treat each other respectfully
- Foster in our students' self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our students.
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.
- Listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them.
- Report suspected cases of bullying to appropriate class teacher or House Office (SSA, tutor or Senior Tutor).
- Actively promote Anti-Bullying Week each year in their Tutor sessions and through various activities and resources that are selected for use before, during and after that week.

Students

We expect and teach our students to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.

- Intervene to protect the student who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances. Witnessing bullying without acting or reporting it will be regarded as offering tacit support for the bully and effectively joining in with the bullying.

Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should:

- Not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.
- Not use bullying tactics themselves as retaliation.

Parents

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying.
- Taking appropriate responsibility for the use and misuse of technology, including social media
- Advising their children to report any bullying to a member of staff and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other students.
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying.
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken; whilst helping to foster confidence, assertiveness and negotiation skills to deal with unkind behaviour
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved;
- Co-operating with the school, if their children are accused of bullying, trying to ascertain the truth.
- Speaking respectfully when talking to all members of staff

6 Anti-Bullying Charter

Each Academy should work together with students to develop and update an agreed anti-bullying charter which reflects the ideals of this anti-bullying policy and the values of both the Academy and the Trust. This could include;

- Expectations for behaviour
- How to report bullying
- Expected response to bullying, including sanctions and/or support
- Consequences and escalation route linked to the Behaviour Policy
- Education and information sharing

APPENDIX A- Useful links for information and support

Who	About	Link
Anti-bullying Alliance	A unique coalition of organisations and individuals, working together to achieve our vision to: stop bullying and create safer environments in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn. We welcome membership from any organisation or individual that supports this vision and support a free network of thousands of schools and colleges.	Anti-Bullying Alliance
Bullies Out	Work to reduce the impact of bullying behaviour and the harm it causes through programmes, resources and services	BulliesOut - Anti-Bullying Training, Awareness and Support
Charter (ideas from Sunderland)	Sunderland have established a Young Peoples Charter for Anti bullying that is worth reading	Layout 1 (togetherforchildren.org.uk)
The Diana Award	Engaging young people, parents and teachers to change the attitudes, behaviour and culture of bullying by building skills and confidence to address different situations, both online and offline.	The Diana Award - Anti-Bullying (diana-award.org.uk)
Family Lives	Provide advice through confidential helplines, live chats, parenting advice and courses, extensive video library	Bullying advice Bullying UK Family Lives
Gov.UK	Advice on forms of bullying that are illegal	Bullying at school: The law - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Kidscape	Their vision is for all children to grow up in supportive communities safe from bullying and harm. They provide practical support, training, and advice to challenge bullying and protect young lives.	Help With Bullying (kidscape.org.uk)
Stonewall	Stonewall, stands for lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning and ace (LGBTQ+) people everywhere. They imagine a world where all LGBTQ+ people are free to be themselves and live their lives to the full.	Anti-bullying Stonewall
Youth Endowment Fund	Anti-bullying programmes aim to reduce bullying in schools. They typically involve both the children involved in bullying, as well as other students, school staff, parents, and the wider community	Anti-bullying programmes Youth Endowment Fund
Young Minds	Supporting mental health through helping people understand more about how they're feeling and find ways to feel better or offering support to someone who's struggling.	Bullying How To Deal With Bullying and Getting Help YoungMinds

Technology	Great for:	Examples of misuse:
Mobile phone	Keeping in touch by voice or text, taking and sending pictures and film, listening to music, playing games, going online and sending emails. Useful in emergency situations and for allowing children a greater sense of independence.	Sending nasty calls or text messages, including threats, intimidation, and harassment. Taking and sharing humiliating and/or inappropriate images. Videoing other people being harassed and sending these to other phones or internet sites. Use of Apps to create Deepfake images or voice cloning
Social media (Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter)	A quick and effective way of keeping in touch even while working on other things. Allows images, sounds, videos and text to be shared with others.	Sending nasty messages or content. Using someone else's account to forward rude or inappropriate messages via their contacts list.
Chatrooms & message boards	Groups of people around the world can text or voice chat live about common interests. For young people, this can be an easy way to meet new people and explore issues which they are too shy to talk about in person.	Sending nasty or threatening anonymous messages. Groups of people deciding to pick on or ignore individuals. Making friends under false pretences – people pretending to be someone they're not in order to get personal information that they can misuse in a range of ways – e.g. by spreading secrets or blackmailing.
Webcams	Taking pictures or recording messages. Being able to see and talk to someone live on your computer screen. Bringing far-off places to life or video conferencing	Making and sending inappropriate content, such as the creation and circulation of Deepfake images or voice cloning. Persuading or threatening young people to act in inappropriate ways. Using inappropriate recordings to manipulate young people.
Social network Sites	Socialising with your friends and making new ones within online communities. Allowing young people to be creative online, even publishing online music. Personalising homepages and profiles, creating and uploading content.	Posting nasty comments, humiliating images / video. Accessing another person's account details and sending unpleasant messages, deleting information or making private information public. Groups of people picking on individuals by excluding them. Creating fake profiles to pretend to be someone else, e.g. to bully, harass or get the person into trouble.
Video hosting sites	Accessing useful educational, entertaining and original creative video content and uploading your own	Posting embarrassing, humiliating film of someone, including Deepfakes (images or voice cloning).
Virtual Learning Environment	School site, usually available from home and school, set up for tracking and recording student assignments, tests and activities, with message boards, chat and IM.	Posting inappropriate messages or images. Hacking into someone else's account to post inappropriate comments or delete school work.
Gaming sites Consoles & Virtual worlds	Live text or voice chat during online gaming between players across the world, or on handheld consoles with people in the same local area. Virtual worlds let users design their own	Name-calling, making abusive / derogatory remarks. Players may pick on weaker or less experienced users, repeatedly killing their characters. Forwarding unwanted messages to avatars – a figure that represents them in the virtual world or other devices in the immediate vicinity.