



## **Anti-bullying policy**

### **Rationale**

Everyone at Minerva Primary Academy takes bullying seriously; we want all children and adults to feel safe, respected, and happy to allow everyone to 'Learn, believe, grow and achieve' both academically and socially and emotionally when they are at school. At Minerva we teach our community about what bullying is and what to do if you think it is happening. We do this through our Minerva Global Citizens curriculum and our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). This is in addition to promoting in the national anti-bullying week in November.

This policy should be read alongside the child-friendly anti bullying policy that has been written with children and the Behaviour for learning policy which details how we teach and develop a safe, respectful, learning environment.

### **What is bullying?**

Bullying is the deliberate use of unkind actions or words. We use 'STOP' to help our community remember that it is not a one-off incident.

Several

Times

On

Purpose

Bullying comes under the category of child on child abuse.

### **Child on Child Abuse** (as described in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 DfE)

Child-on-child abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse using coercion/power and/or control by an individual child or group of children and is exercised between children and within their relationships (both intimate and non-intimate).

All staff at Minerva Primary Academy know that children can abuse their peers and it can happen both inside and outside of school and online. All staff have annual safeguarding training and are clear on the school's policy and procedures. Staff understand that even if there are no reports of bullying it does not mean that it is not happening. We proactively teach children about the importance of having at least three trusted adults in school. It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children, many of which are listed below, that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

**Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:**

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- upskirting which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm, and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

Bullying is unwanted behaviour among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated or has the potential to be repeated over time. Children and young people who are bullied and/or who bully others may have serious and lasting problems.

Bullying can be motivated by perceived differences. e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other differences and result in significant, long lasting, and traumatic isolation, intimidation, and/or violence to the victim.

To be considered bullying, the behaviour will include one or more of the following:

- An imbalance of power such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity to control or harm others. These imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people
- Repetition as these behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once
- Actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally or for a particular reason, e.g. size, hair colour, gender, sexual orientation, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

## **Signs of Bullying**

A child may indicate by sign or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Is unwilling to go to school
- Has possessions which are damaged or go missing
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged/ mislaid
- Tries to avoid going out to play at break or lunchtimes (remains close to an adult)
- Asks to move seats in class to avoid contact with certain other pupils
- Reduced appetite
- Becomes anxious, withdrawn or lacking in confidence
- Difficulty sleeping
- Feels ill in the morning
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Becomes short-tempered
- Is exhibiting bullying behaviour towards or children or siblings
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Change in attitude to people at home
- Is frightened to say what's wrong

## **Procedures for dealing with incidents of Bullying**

Minerva Primary Academy uses a three-stage approach for dealing with incidents of bullying: All staff should adopt a positive mind set when responding to bullying concerns and have options for how to respond to incidents of bullying in a planned, deliberate and positive way.

### **Stage 1 – Investigate & teach**

- Listen to the child, parent or staff member who is reporting the suspected bullying behaviours
- This will be logged on our internal safeguarding system (CPOMS) under the category 'suspected bullying'
- A trusted adult will speak with all the children involved to investigate what has happened.
- MPA staff will support the children to understand that the behaviour displayed are either bullying or a one off behaviour incident and explain the level of distress that has been caused by the behaviours.
- MPA staff will support a mediated conversation or a restorative conversation.
- Parents of all children involved will be informed

## **Stage 2 – Monitor and support**

- Monitor the situation carefully. The class teacher will take the lead on this and involve regular check ins.
- Help the bullied pupil to identify ways in which he/she may be strengthened and supported, e.g. peer support, trusted adults and scripting.
- Support the child who is demonstrating the bullying behaviour to understand better choices and know how to act appropriately in different social situations. This might be through a group social intervention or lunchtime club
- Be prepared to intervene with a higher response level if the situation persists or deteriorates.
- To ensure regular feedback is given on agreed actions.

After a period of support and monitoring carefully it is likely that there will be no further incidents and the CPOMs log can be closed. It is the duty of staff to handover relevant information to subsequent teaching staff so that low level monitoring can continue, and awareness and vigilance can be ensured.

## **Stage 3 - Further investigation and support**

Stage 3 will occur when further incidents have been reported. Interventions at stage 3 will involve the Safeguarding Lead, SENCO, and other senior leaders, in collaboration with pupil(s) and parents to determine the way forward in affecting change. Bullying at this level often involves complex group dynamics, where a number of roles are evident, such as those displaying bullying behaviour, bystanders and pupils experiencing bullying. Consequently, interventions will require one-to-one meetings, small group work and whole class involvement.

- Listen to the child, parent or staff member who is reporting the further bullying behaviours
- A trusted adult will speak with all the children involved to investigate what has happened and determine if it is bullying.
- This will be logged on our internal safeguarding system under the category ‘suspected bullying’
- MPA staff will support the children to understand that the behaviours displayed are bullying and explain the level of distress that has been caused by the behaviours.
- MPA staff will support a mediated conversation or a restorative conversation.
- Individual plans will be put in place to support the victim and the perpetrator/s.
- Parents of all children involved will be informed
- Where appropriate external professionals will be involved

In very rare cases, bullying is identified as severe and involves a significant threat to the safety and welfare of the pupils. Such severe bullying concerns may be new or may have proved resistant to earlier school interventions and have now been assessed as high risk. Incidents at this level must be assessed in relation to the risk posed to any/all of the pupils involved. As such, the school’s safeguarding policy and procedures will need to be invoked. In addition to safeguarding procedures and practices including referral to external support services, this may include referral to outside agencies such as an educational psychologist or Be Safe. The school’s interventions should continue to implement interventions detailed at stage 3 as appropriate.

## **The Responsibilities of Staff**

Our staff will:

- foster in our pupils self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others
- demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils.
- discuss bullying with all classes, so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the bully and the importance of being 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 (name of teacher and post, eg our designated teacher for child protection/head of pastoral care).
- follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken.
- deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.

## **The Responsibilities of Pupils**

We expect our pupils to:

- refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- seek out and tell a trusted adult of any concerns
- 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.

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.

## **The Responsibilities of 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.
- advising their children to report any bullying to (name of a member of staff/specific post in school/their class teacher) and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils.
- 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
- keep a written record of any reported instances of bullying

## Definitions of other forms of bullying

**Online bullying** - is the use of technology (social networking, messaging, text messages, email, chat rooms, etc.) to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above. It can take many forms and this list is not exhaustive:

- Abusive or threatening texts, emails, or messages
- Posting abusive comments on social media sites or group chats
- Sharing humiliating videos or photos of someone else
- Stealing someone's online identity
- Spreading rumours online
- Trolling-sending menacing or upsetting messages through social networks, chat rooms or games
- Prank calls or messages
- Anonymous messaging
- Encouraging a young person to self-harm
- Pressuring children to send sexual messages or engaging in sexual conversations.

**Prejudiced related bullying** - refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, physical or emotional or both, which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society, e.g. disabilities and special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life (for example in relation to issues of care, parental occupation, poverty and social class) and sexual identity.

**Sexting** - the sharing of nude or indecent imagery (youth produced sexual imagery) The term 'sexting' relates to the sending of indecent images, videos and/or written messages with sexually explicit content; these are created and sent electronically. They are often 'shared' via social networking sites and instant messaging services. These images may have been because of upskirting.

**Initiation/Hazing** - Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony which is used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as sports team, etc. There are several different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies. The ceremony welcomes newcomers by subjecting them to a series of trials which promote a bond between them. After the hazing is over, the newcomers also have something in common with older members of the organisation, because they all experienced it as part of a rite passage. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse, and harassment.

**Hate Crime** - Hate crimes happen because of race, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, and disability. They can happen anywhere, home, school and in the community and can be frightening for both victim and witnesses and is an offence. Hate crimes can include:

- Physical attacks - physical assault, damage to property, offensive graffiti, neighbour disputes and arson
- Threat of attack - offensive letters or emails, abusive or obscene telephone calls, groups hanging around to intimidate you and unfounded, malicious complaints
- Verbal abuse or insults - harassment over the phone, by text or face to face, abusive gestures, and remarks, bullying and threats Supporting emotional wellbeing of pupils

Last reviewed: June 2024

Date to be reviewed: July 2026