Discrimination, Racism and Anti-bullying Policy

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Equalities Statement

In our Trust we work to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all members of our community who hold a range of protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, as well as having regard to other factors which have the potential to cause inequality, such as socio-economic factors. For further information, please see our Equalities Policy.

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1. Statement of Intent

Meopham School is committed to ensuring that students learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will students be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at school.
This policy is based on DfE guidance "Preventing and Tackling Bullying" July 2017 and supporting documents. It also considers the DfE statutory guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education" 2025 and MSS Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy 2025-2026.
The setting has also read Childnet's "Cyberbullying: Understand, Prevent and Respond: Guidance for Schools".

2. Policy objectives

- This policy outlines what Meopham School will do to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying.
- The policy has been adopted with the involvement of the whole school community.
- Meopham School is committed to developing an anti-bullying culture where the bullying of adults, children or young people is not tolerated in any form.

3. Links with other school policies and practices

This policy links with several school policies, practices and action plans including:

- Behaviour policy.
- Complaints policy.
- Safeguarding and Child protection policy.
- Online safety and Acceptable Use Policies (AUP).
- Curriculum policies, such as: PSHE, citizenship and IT.

4. Links to legislation

There are several pieces of legislation which set out measures and actions for schools in response to bullying, as well as criminal and civil law. These may include (but are not limited to):

- The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011.
- The Equality Act 2010.
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997.
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988.
- Public Order Act 1986.
- Online Safety Act 2023.

5. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of:

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- The Headteacher to communicate this policy to the school community, to ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently, and reasonably, and that a member of the Senior Leadership Team has been identified to take overall responsibility.
- Governors to take a lead role in monitoring and reviewing this policy.
- All staff, including governors, senior leadership, teaching and non-teaching staff, to support, uphold and implement this policy accordingly.
- Parents/carers to support the school in tackling concerns of unkindness and bullying and work in partnership with the school.
- Students follow the policy and speak out when instances of bullying may occur rather than becoming a bystander.

6. Definition

Bullying is any behaviour, which is deliberately intended to hurt, threaten or frighten another person or group of people. It is repeated and usually unprovoked and can continue for a prolonged period of time. It always reflects an imbalance and abuse of power. It is important that it must not be confused with the usual childhood/teenage squabbles and arguments where individuals “fall out” with one another.

- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, or religious discrimination of any kind
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact, sexual harassment, sexism, or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic/biphobic – because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Transphobic - because of, or focusing on the issue of identification of gender
- Verbal – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber – all areas of the internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse. Mobile threats by text messaging and calls. Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities and social media messaging/posting
- Disability/SEND – because of or focusing on a disability or special educational need.
- Home circumstance – targeting individuals who are looked after children or because of a particular home circumstance.

Bullying can therefore constitute any of the above activities within the context of the definition provided. Bullying may occur to anyone and this policy is inclusive of the bullying of school staff, whether by students, parents/carers or other staff. (Members of the school workforce suffering from or concerned about bullying may also contact their trade union or professional association for support and advice). Bullying should also be seen in acts of sexism and continual condescending, inappropriate and unwanted comments or attention due to a child or adult gender.

Bullying can seriously damage a person’s confidence and sense of self-worth, and they will often feel that they are at fault in some way. Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness or taking unusual absences. There may be evidence in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school. These signs and

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symptoms may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Bullying can happen to anyone. This policy covers all types and forms of bullying including:

- Bullying related to physical appearance
- Bullying of young carers, children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Bullying related to physical/mental health conditions
- Physical bullying
- Emotional bullying
- Sexual bullying
- Bullying via technology, known as online or cyberbullying
- Prejudicial bullying (against people/students with protected characteristics):
- Bullying related to race, religion, faith and belief and for those without faith o Bullying related to ethnicity, nationality or culture
- Bullying related to Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND)
- Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic/biphobic bullying)
- Gender based bullying, including transphobic bullying o Bullying against teenage parents (pregnancy and maternity under the Equality Act

7. What is Discrimination, Racism and Bullying (DRB)

Discrimination: Treating someone unfairly because of a protected characteristic, such as race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Racism: Prejudice or discrimination directed at someone based on their race or ethnicity.

Bullying: Repeated, aggressive behaviour used to intimidate, hurt, or control another person. This can be physical, verbal, emotional, or social.

Forms of DRB

This policy covers all forms of DRB, including:

- Racial bullying: Name-calling, teasing, threats, or violence based on race or ethnicity.
- Disability-based bullying: Mocking or excluding someone because of a disability.
- Homophobic/transphobic bullying: Bullying based on sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Sexist or sexual bullying: Unwanted sexual comments or advances.
- Misogyny: Hatred or contempt for women. This can include verbal abuse, threats,intimidation, and physical violence.
- Discrimination based on Religion: Treating someone differently because of their religion or beliefs. This can include exclusion, harassment, and denial of opportunities.
- Extremism: Holding extreme political or religious views that promote violence or hatred.
- Body Image Bullying: Making negative comments about someone's appearance, weight, or size.
- Cyberbullying: Using electronic communication to bully someone, such as through text messages, social media, or online gaming. (To prevent cyberbullying and distractions, all

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electronic devices must be powered off and stored securely in bags upon entering school grounds and remain so throughout the entire school day, including breaks and lunch. Please refer to our mobile phone and electronics policy)

Preventing DRB

We take proactive steps to prevent DRB through:

Social and emotional learning: We integrate lessons that develop respect, empathy, and responsible behaviour.
Anti-discrimination team: This dedicated team addresses incidents of prejudice and promotes positive school culture.
Assemblies and Personal Development Time (PDT): We raise awareness about DRB through regular assemblies and activities during character education and Personal Development Time.

8. Child-on-child abuse

Child-on-child abuse – children harming other children - is unacceptable and will be taken seriously; it will not be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys'. It is more likely that boys will be perpetrators of child-on-child abuse and girls the victims, but allegations will be dealt with in the same manner, regardless of whether they are made by boys or girls. Child-on-child abuse would also include upskirting, non-consensual sharing of nudes/semi-nudes, and sexual violence/harassment under this definition. More information can be found in the MSS Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy 2025-2026.

9. Meopham School Objectives

- To prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.
- To react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way.
- To safeguard the student who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support.
- To apply disciplinary sanctions to the student causing the bullying and ensure they learn from the experience, possibly through multi-agency support.
- To work with other agencies such as Kent Police Youth Engagement Team, Early Intervention teams and others to support issues outside of school hours or jurisdiction.

10. Policy Aims

- All students, parents/carers, staff and governors should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- Staff and governors should follow the school policy when bullying is reported or suspected.
- All students and parents/carers should know what bullying is and inform a member of staff if bullying arises.
- Meopham School will always take bullying seriously. We use a range of proactive and reactive strategies to combat and prevent bullying.

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11. Reporting Procedures

If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be taken seriously and dealt with as quickly as possible by the member of staff who has been approached. A clear account of the incident will be recorded and passed to the student's community team.

Heads of Year will investigate the incident by interviewing all concerned and record outcomes on the files of those involved.

Subject staff will be kept informed and asked to monitor the behaviour of the students concerned, where appropriate.

Parents/Carers will be kept informed and are discouraged from taking matters into their own hands and should not approach a suspected student but speak to a member of staff.

Each incident of actual or alleged bullying will be unique in its representation and its level of impact on the individuals concerned. Therefore, it is important that the school is given the opportunity and time to tailor a strategy to address the situation and to support the bullied student according to the particular incident/s.

Students who are victims of bullying will be offered the opportunity to discuss their experience with their Head of Year or another member of staff, be offered support in terms of access to the peer mentoring scheme to restore self-esteem and build confidence and have the use of a supportive area and any unstructured time changes agreed, for as long as needed.

Students who have been perpetrators of bullying will be helped by; discussing what happened, discovering why the student became involved and establishing a sense of wrongdoing. Parents/Carers will be informed to help change the attitude and behaviour of the student.

In agreement with both parties involved there will also be the opportunity to rebuild relationships, involving a discussion mediated by a member of staff as a way of resolving disputes. Our Year teams have been trained in 'restorative justice' and look to complete this at the end of any investigation into bullying. Internal reporting procedures can be located by school staff on the internal policies page on the school dashboard.

12. The following disciplinary steps may be taken:

- Official warning to stop unkind and unacceptable behaviour.
- Sanctions such as: break time, lunchtime or after school detention issued and communicated to parents.
- Exclusion from certain areas of the school premises or certain activities.
- Escalated sanctions: Direction off Site (DoS), Suspension (Authorised by ERO), Serious Incident Meeting, Student Support Provision.
- Referral to external agencies e.g. Early Help, Police Youth Engagement Team, Child Centred Policing Team.

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13. Prevention – Whole school

As a school we take bullying seriously. We use a range of proactive strategies to prevent bullying. These include:

- Effective school leadership that promotes an open and honest anti-bullying ethos.
- Use of curriculum opportunities, in particular during advisory sessions and Personal Development classes where issues of diversity are discussed, and anti-bullying messages are drawn out.
- Use of opportunities throughout the school calendar and at certain times of the school day to raise awareness of the negative consequences of bullying e.g. Anti-Bullying Week in November of each year.
- Whole school assemblies. We deliver anti-bullying assemblies, in which the key message is to have the courage to speak up. Year group assemblies also identify where students can get help if they are concerned about bullying of young people.
- Student surveys and students' views sought in developing school policies.
- Poster campaigns.
- Review of general and specific staff induction and continuing professional development to ensure staff training reflects the anti-bullying policy and practice of the school.

14. Prevention – Practical Support

● Pastoral Support Managers - Our dedicated team of Pastoral Support Managers are there to listen, advise and act on any reports of bullying swiftly. Liaising with parents/carers of those bullying others and those feeling bullied. They are available before school, at break time, lunchtime and after school.

● Break and Lunchtime Supervision - Staff are on duty during break and lunchtimes and are always on hand to deal with any issues reported to them and support areas of concern. This includes key members of that student's year group team.

● Access to Indoor Areas - Mainstream students are able to access the calm room during break time and lunchtime. During unstructured times any students with an EHCP or specific needs can access the oasis rooms or the Windmill provision if appropriate.. There are also a range of enrichment activities that students can take part in during unstructured times.

We firmly believe that the systems in place are robust and effective, however all rely on the school being informed of a situation occurring. Students in all instances are encouraged to tell someone if they are experiencing bullying as soon as possible, so the school can take action that day.

15. Supporting Adults

Our school takes measures to prevent and tackle bullying among students; however, it is equally important to recognise that bullying of adults, including staff and parents/carers, whether by students, parents/carers or other staff members, is unacceptable. Adults who have been bullied or affected will be supported by:

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- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the concern with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, a senior member of staff and/or the Headteacher.
- Advising them to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience, as appropriate.
- Where the bullying takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including online), the school will still investigate the concern and ensure that appropriate action is taken in accordance with the schools' behaviour and discipline policy.
- Reporting offensive or upsetting content and/or accounts to the service provider, where the bullying has occurred online.
- Reassuring and offering appropriate support.
- Working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance.

Adults who have perpetrated the bullying will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened with a senior member of staff and/or the headteacher to establish the concern.
- Establishing whether a legitimate grievance or concern has been raised and signposting to the school's official complaints procedures.
- If online, requesting that content be removed.
- Instigating disciplinary, civil or legal action as appropriate or required.

16. Involvement and liaison with parents and carers

We will:

- Take steps to involve parents/carers in developing policies and procedures, to ensure they are aware that the school does not tolerate any form of bullying.
- Make sure that key information about bullying (including policies and named points of contact) is available to parents/carers in a variety of formats, including via the school website.
- Ensure 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.
- Ensure that parents work with the school to role model positive behaviour for students, 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.

17. Development, Monitoring and Review.

We plan to:

- Monitor, evaluate and review our anti-bullying policy on a regular basis led by the Community Teams and student voice information.
- All incidents will be recorded on CPOMS.
- All logged incidents of DRB will be analysed regularly to identify patterns, trends or hotspots in school.

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- Ensure that students are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively and seek feedback from students via annual student questionnaires.
- Learn from anti-bullying good practice elsewhere and utilise the support of the Swale Academies Trust and relevant statutory/voluntary organisations when appropriate.

18. 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
- Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
- Childnet: www.childnet.com
- Internet Watch Foundation: www.iwf.org.uk
- Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk
- DfE 'Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff': www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying DfE 'Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying'www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventingandtackling-bullying
- Stop Hate: www.stophateuk.org
- Educate against Hate: www.educateagainsthate.com
- Show Racism the Red Card: www.srtrc.org/educational
- Stonewall: www.stonewall.org.uk
- Sexual harassment and sexual bullying Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAW) www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/data/files/resources/71/EVAWCoalition-Schools-Guide.pdf

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