



# Melbourn Village College

Anti-Bullying Policy	
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<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Principal

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## Context

Whilst bullying and intimidation exist in society in many forms, including increasingly through social media, that does not mean that it is acceptable. No child should have to accept this type of behaviour as part of their school experience.

At Melbourn Village College the belief that 'Everybody is Somebody' is central to all that we do. Our three 'keys to success' are to:

- Be ready
- Be respectful
- Be responsible

Bullying therefore goes against our core values and expectations. We will treat bullying seriously and will do our best to reduce it at school, both through our response to incidents and through the wider pro-active education of young people in the correct ways to behave and function within a wider community.

## Definition of Bullying

The term bullying can often be mis-used and there can be confusion over its meaning. One-off incidents, whilst they will be dealt with and may be serious, do not constitute bullying. Similarly, young people will disagree from time to time and pupils who are friends can fall out. We record and tackle individual incidents which, over time, can develop into bullying. Bullying is defined using the 'four Ps':

- Premeditated:** It is deliberately intended to be hurtful  
**Persistent:** It is repeated over time  
**Painful:** It causes pain / hurt to the victim(s)  
**Power:** There is an imbalance of power between the two parties

Bullying can take many different forms:

- Cyber:** Mobile threats via text messaging or calls, emails, misuse of social media and other internet  
**Homophobic:** because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality or transgender misuse. Includes the misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera / video  
**Emotional:** being unfriendly, excluding from groups or games, tormenting (e.g. taking / hiding possessions)  
**Physical:** pushing, kicking, hitting, punching etc  
**Prejudice:** On the grounds of different interests, economic status etc. includes prejudice against pupils with SEND.  
**Racist:** racial taunts, graffiti, gestures or comments  
**Sexual:** unwanted physical contact, sexual violence, sexual harassment, sexually abusive comments, coercion into sending pictures (sexting), up-skirting etc  
**Verbal:** Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing etc

Bullying can occur in any context and, therefore, in any school. At MVC we have a two-pronged strategy to deal with bullying. Firstly, we will seek to educate pupils through lessons, tutor times and assemblies in order to reinforce appropriate behaviours and reduce the frequency of bullying incidents. Secondly, we will treat any incident of bullying seriously.

## Dealing with Bullying

We would encourage any child who has been the victim of, or has witnessed, bullying to report it as soon as possible to any member of school staff. It would usually be dealt with by a form tutor or member of our safeguarding team. In more serious cases, the relevant Head of Year(s) or Assistant Principal. Any such incident would be dealt with in line with our behaviour policy. As such we will talk to the suspected victim, the suspected bully and any witnesses.

In all cases our aims will be:

1. To stop the bullying
2. To support the victim
3. To change the behaviour of those responsible for the bullying
4. Where possible, to enable reconciliation between the parties

We will support the victim by:

- Offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience
- Informing their parents/carers
- Keeping them involved in decisions over actions to be taken – including any restorative meeting
- Offering them continued support should they need it
- Taking steps to prevent further bullying

Often children worry that reporting bullying will make it worse. Experience shows that whilst this can happen initially, it is not usually the case. Any bullying victim will have a say in discussions about what action is to be taken and we will explain our decisions. In a minor case, even if (at the victim's request) no direct action is taken, the report may enable us to build up a wider picture of behaviour, allowing us to take appropriate action and protect them and other children.

Working with the perpetrator of the bullying is a vital part of preventing further bullying. We will try to work with them to explore the reasons behind their actions and to then change their future behaviour. This is likely to include appropriate sanctions and the contacting of their parents/carers.

Incidents of bullying will be logged using our usual behaviour processes to allow any patterns to be analysed.

## The Role of Parents/Carers

Parents/carers have a very important part to play, as role models, in detecting incidents of bullying and in supporting their children.

We ask parents/carers to:

- Talk to their children about their use of social media / the internet, ensuring it is legal and appropriate and monitoring as necessary
- Watch for signs which might be evidence of bullying, for example unusual behaviour, not wanting to come to school etc
- Advise their child not to retaliate with violence towards any form of bullying
- Advise their child to report any bullying (either as a victim or observer) to a member of staff as soon as possible and support in reassuring them that they will be listened to and taken seriously. In the case of cyberbullying, please also see the specific advice below
- Cooperate with the school during any investigation, including if their child is the alleged perpetrator
- Be aware that they are hearing an account of the situation from one perspective and that this might not be fully accurate or complete.
- Deal with school staff in a respectful way – we know that bullying can be distressing but experience shows that situations are often not as simplistic or straightforward as they might first appear to be. College staff are committed to helping all pupils feel safe at school and so no staff member deserves to be abused.

In serious situations, particularly where the incidents occur outside school and may be criminal in nature, it may be appropriate to involve the police. We can help and advise in these situations, as well as support your child whilst they are in school.

## Cyberbullying

Online technology plays an increasing part in all of our lives, including those of teenage children. Whilst it offers lots of possibilities, including being able to keep in contact with friends etc, there are also a number of pitfalls and dangers. It is tempting to feel there is an anonymity which means people may feel able to behave in ways they wouldn't normally, and young people in particular often don't realise the potential consequences of their online actions.

Through input in lessons, tutor time and assemblies we aim to educate pupils in how to use social media responsibly and we expect parents/carers to do the same. Key messages for young people are as follows:

- Keep your passwords secret – don't share them with anyone, including your friends
- Think carefully about who you share your phone number with
- Always respect other people – treat them how you would if they were standing in front of you
- Think before you send – what you send could be resent and made public very quickly and could stay online forever

- Some online actions – such as sending / receiving inappropriate images - are illegal and could have serious ramifications for your future
- Don't retaliate to any online bullying – learn how to block people
- Keep any evidence – be it conversations or pictures / videos
- Report it! – This could be:
  - To the relevant site
  - To the police – particularly if it happened outside school and might be a criminal offence
  - To an adult in school – we can then support you in school

**Don't just report bullying where you are the victim – if you see someone else being bullied help them by reporting what you have seen.**