Middlewich Primary School
Anti-bullying Policy

'Working together to achieve the very best.'

1. Introduction

At Middlewich Primary School, we recognise that bullying can occur in any school or setting. We are committed to preventing bullying wherever possible and to responding swiftly, consistently and effectively to any incidents, ensuring that all pupils feel safe, valued and supported.

Our approach is underpinned by the Equality Act 2010. We are committed to eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering positive relationships across our diverse school community.

We are proud of the strong caring ethos at Middlewich Primary School, reflected in the positive relationships between pupils, staff, parents/carers and governors. Robust safeguarding procedures are in place, and all staff share responsibility for protecting pupils from harm and supporting them to thrive both academically and emotionally.

All members of the school community are expected to remain vigilant in supporting pupil welfare. This policy reflects our ongoing commitment to maintaining a safe, inclusive and respectful environment for every child.

2. Aims

We are determined to promote and develop a school ethos where bullying behaviour is regarded as unacceptable, to ensure a safe and secure environment is sustained for all pupils.

As a school we aim:

1. To provide a supportive, caring and safe environment where children can learn and play without fear of being bullied or harassment of any kind
2. To establish what actions the school will take to ensure that children remain safe and free from bullying
3. To work in partnership with parents/carers and the wider community to challenge prejudice and discrimination and promote equality and good relationships.
4. To raise awareness of staff to issues related to bullying and ensure staff understand their roles and responsibilities in dealing with incidents of it
5. To set down procedures for staff to deal with incidents of bullying

3. Bullying Definition

At Middlewich Primary School, we discuss what bullying is, as well as incidents we would not describe as bullying, with all pupils through assemblies and RSHE lessons.

We agree that:

- Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally

hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally
- Bullying usually happens when the relationship is imbalanced
- It could be prejudice-based or discriminatory

Bullying can take many forms, including:

1. name calling and excessive teasing
2. physical assault
3. ostracising
4. threatening
5. attacks on property
6. cyber bullying (which can involve most of the above)

Each of these can impact upon the long-term emotional wellbeing and self-esteem of the victim.

Bullying is a series of incidents. On occasion children may 'fall out' over petty issues, leading to an unpleasant act. In this case, the incident will be viewed as a 'one off' and dealt with appropriately. It will only be classed as bullying if it continues.

4. Recognising Bullying

All staff have a responsibility to be alert to possible signs of bullying and to act promptly when concerns arise. Bullying may not always be directly reported by pupils and is often identified through observation and professional judgement.

Staff may recognise bullying through:

- **Changes in behaviour or emotional wellbeing**, such as increased anxiety, withdrawal, low mood, tearfulness, or sudden changes in confidence
- **Changes in attendance**, including reluctance to come to school or patterns of lateness
- **Social indicators**, including exclusion from play, isolation during unstructured times, or repeated disputes with the same peers
- **Physical signs**, such as unexplained injuries, damaged clothing or belongings
- **Changes in learning behaviour**, including reduced concentration, lack of engagement, or a sudden decline in attainment
- **Online behaviour concerns**, including upset following online activity, secrecy around devices, or reports of unkind messages or images
- **Reports from peers, parents or carers**, which will always be taken seriously and followed up appropriately

Staff will pay particular attention to patterns of behaviour, as bullying is defined as repeated behaviour over time involving an imbalance of power. Incidents that initially appear to be isolated will still be logged and monitored to ensure that emerging patterns are identified early.

All staff, including teaching staff, support staff, lunchtime supervisors and office staff, are

expected to:

- Challenge and address unkind behaviour immediately
- Report concerns in line with the school's behaviour and safeguarding procedures
- Record incidents accurately to support monitoring and follow-up

The school recognises that early identification and intervention are key to preventing bullying from escalating and to safeguarding pupils' emotional wellbeing.

5. Vulnerable Groups

Whilst we know that any person could be bullied, there are some children who may be more likely to be targeted because they are perceived as different or less powerful. Staff are aware of this and pay particularly attention to the following group:

Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)
Children with autism, ADHD, learning difficulties, speech and language needs, or physical disabilities may be more vulnerable. Differences in communication or behaviour can make it harder to recognise, avoid or report bullying.

Children with visible differences or medical needs
This includes children with birthmarks, scars, glasses, hearing aids, mobility aids, or long-term medical conditions. These differences may be highlighted by peers and used for teasing or exclusion.

Socially isolated children
Children with few friends, those who are shy or anxious, new starters, or pupils who move schools frequently may lack the peer protection that helps prevent bullying.

Children perceived as 'different'
Pupils whose interests, play preferences, or behaviour differ from the majority, including those who do not conform to gender stereotypes, may stand out and be targeted.

Children from minority ethnic, cultural, or religious backgrounds
Children whose ethnicity, culture, language, or religion differs from that of most peers, including those with English as an Additional Language (EAL), may be at increased risk where understanding and inclusion are lacking.

Children experiencing difficulties at home
Family disruption, trauma, neglect, or being in care can affect children's emotional wellbeing and behaviour, sometimes increasing vulnerability to bullying.

Children with low confidence or self-esteem
Children who appear less confident, assertive, or emotionally resilient may be targeted as they are perceived as less likely to challenge or report bullying.

6. Bullying Prevention

Preventing bullying and raising awareness are essential in keeping incidents within our school to a minimum. Through assemblies and RSHE lessons, pupils are given regular opportunities to explore what bullying is, as well as behaviours that are not considered

bullying, such as one-off arguments or friendship difficulties.

Our Behaviour Policy outlines clear rewards and consequences, which are applied consistently. These are used alongside the promotion of positive relationships, respect and kindness to prevent inappropriate behaviour and to encourage positive behaviour across the school.

An annual Anti-Bullying Week is held to further raise awareness, promote positive attitudes, and reinforce the school's commitment to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all pupils.

Online safety forms an important part of the curriculum. Pupils are taught how to stay safe online, including how to recognise and respond to cyber bullying. Information and guidance for parents and carers are shared through school newsletters and made available on the school website.

Middlewich Primary is a 'Telling School', where children, parents/carers and staff are actively encouraged to report any suspected incidents of bullying to a trusted adult. Children are taught that everyone has a responsibility for preventing bullying, that ignoring bullying is wrong, and that we all have a duty to look after one another and speak out if someone is being hurt or excluded.

Pupils are encouraged and supported to tell a trusted adult in school if they are concerned that they, or someone else, may be experiencing bullying. The school promotes a culture where pupils feel confident that concerns will be listened to, taken seriously and investigated sensitively. Children are reassured that they can approach any member of staff with a concern.

Visual reminders are displayed throughout the school to reinforce this message. Posters are displayed in every classroom and outside the Headteacher's office reminding pupils to 'Speak Out, Stay Safe', and these include photographs of identified trusted adults.

7. Responding to bullying and suspected cases of bullying

All cases of alleged bullying must be reported to the headteacher, deputy headteacher, or a senior member of staff.

In any case of alleged bullying, the class teacher, headteacher, or a senior member of staff will establish the facts and build an accurate picture of events over time. This will involve speaking to the alleged victim, alleged perpetrator and any relevant adult or pupil witnesses. Parents/carers may also be consulted where necessary and appropriate.

Investigations may result in a range of actions, depending on the nature and severity of the incident, including:

- Providing support and ongoing monitoring for the child who is being bullied
- Working with the child who is bullying to help them understand and improve their behaviour

- Involving parents/carers at an early stage for both the child who is being bullied and the child responsible for the bullying
- Applying appropriate sanctions in line with the school's Behaviour Policy, including suspension, only as a last resort
- Seeking additional support or advice from external agencies where appropriate

Where an allegation of bullying is upheld, the headteacher or senior leader will seek to use a restorative approach, where appropriate. This may involve bringing the perpetrator and victim together to support understanding, repair relationships and prevent further incidents. The impact of the behaviour on the victim will be clearly explained so that the perpetrator understands the consequences of their actions.

The child responsible for the bullying will receive an appropriate consequence in line with the school's Behaviour Policy, alongside support to help them modify their behaviour and develop positive relationships.

All bullying incidents must be recorded on CPOMS. Parents/carers of both the victim and the perpetrator will be informed and kept updated as appropriate. However, details of any specific consequences for the perpetrators will never be shared with families other than their own.

All bullying incidents will also be anonymously shared with governors. Governors will seek to ensure the school has followed it's policies and is working proactively with the children and families.

If the situation does not improve, the headteacher or a senior leader will meet with the parents/carers of the pupil responsible for the bullying to agree clear expectations, boundaries and next steps, which will be shared with the pupil themself.

Any further incidents may result in increased monitoring, further support, involvement of outside agencies and/or more serious sanctions, as deemed necessary. Action will continue to be taken until the bullying has stopped. Staff will continue to closely monitor the relationships of the children following a case of bullying to ensure all parties can be sure that the bullying has ceased.

Reviewed by: -

Headteacher G Reynolds

Full Governing Board

Date 15/05/2026

This policy is reviewed annually.