Merton anti bullying best practice toolkit 2022

Merton
Safeguarding
Children Partnership

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Contents

This toolkit was developed by the Merton Anti Bullying Operation Group with representatives from VBS, the Virtual School, School Improvement, Youth Participation and staff from Merton's primary and secondary schools. It was made possible by the participation of children and young people in Merton schools.

Introduction

Definition of bullying

In order to deal with bullying successfully it is important that all staff, pupils and parents share an understanding of what we mean by bullying. The Anti-Bullying Alliance and its members have a shared definition of bullying based on research from across the world over the last 30 years:-

*"The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online" (*Our definition of bullying (anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk))

Child on child abuse

It is important to also recognise that there is a close relationship between bullying and wider child on child abuse. Child on child abuse occurs when a child or young person is exploited, bullied and / or harmed by their peers who are the same or similar age both inside and outside of school and online. KCSIE 2021 highlights the need for all schools to be vigilant and recognise the many types of child on child abuse. Child on child abuse includes violence, sexual violence and online abuse. Staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (referred to as peer on peer abuse and now child on child abuse) and that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online. Some but not all

instances of child on child abuse will amount to bullying. Research suggests that girls and young women are more at risk of abusive behaviours perpetrated by their peers; however it can also affect boys and young men, those with SEND, LGBTQ Children and young people (CYP) and other minority communities.

Online bullying

Online bullying is when someone bullies others using electronic means, this might involve social media and messaging services on the internet, accessed on a mobile phone, tablet or gaming platform. The behaviour is usually repeated. There is a strong link between 'traditional' face to face bullying and online bullying. Most bullying is face-to-face – with online used as a modern tool to supplement traditional forms. Online bullying can occur outside of school, at weekends, evenings or during school holidays. This can be particularly difficult for those being targeted as it can feel relentless. It is important for schools to deal with incidents of bullying wherever they occur as one Merton secondary school put it "they are still our pupils", and pupils need to know that if they are deliberately targeted online by other pupils that they should report it and it will be taken seriously by staff. Online abuse and bullying can of course be from children, young people or adults outside of the school environment and more rarely can involve strangers.

It is likely that there will be long term changes in the use of online learning platforms which have been developed during the pandemic. Whilst national and local data suggests that bullying decreased during lockdowns, bullying when it has occurred has happened online. More children and young people have had access to online learning and have used social media more to keep in touch and this has given opportunities for online bullying ([Bullying in the pandemic.pdf (anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)](#)) The rise in use of digital platforms and

TYPES OF ONLINE BULLYING

Online bullying can include:

- *sending threatening or abusive messages*
- *creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos*
- *trolling – the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, group chats or online games*
- *excluding others from online games or group chats.*
- *shaming someone online*
- *setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child or young person*
- *encouraging young people to self-harm*
- *voting for or against someone in an abusive poll*
- *creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name*
- *sending explicit messages of another child or young person without their consent*
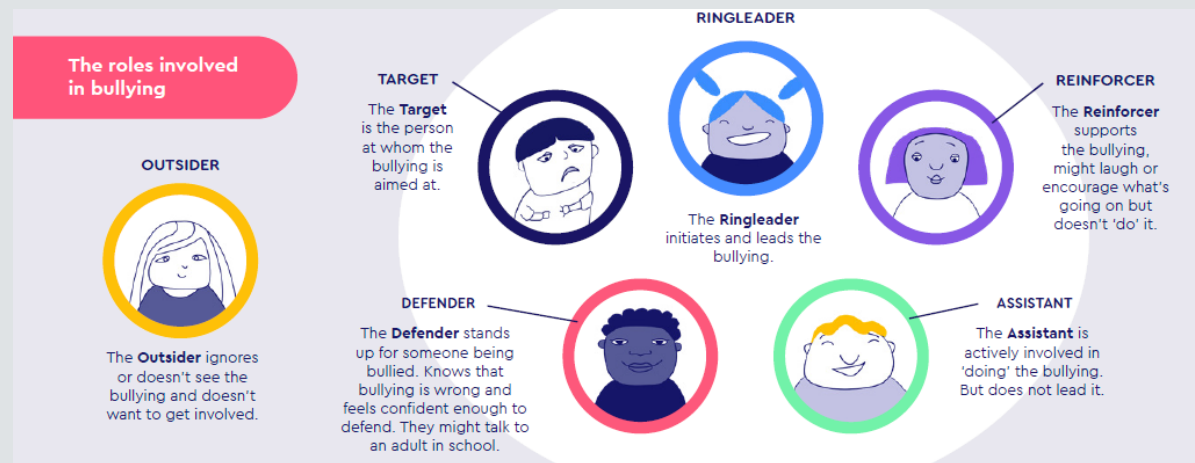- *pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual*

social media across all ages has been well documented. The potential for online bullying has increased and will need to remain a focus for schools and other settings.

Schools have a responsibility to ensure pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and as part of that should be taught that social media and messaging content can be difficult to control. Once messages and images have been shared, it can be impossible to delete them. This is important in relation to bullying as it may mean the target being reminded of the incidents long after the issues have been resolved.

How to support children who have been bullied and are targets of bullying

Role of bystanders in bullying situations

Research undertaken in Finland by Christina Salmivalli (1996) gave us a greater understanding of the roles involved in bullying. It showed that the traditional view of bullying where there is a 'victim' and a 'bully' was much more complicated. His model has been developed further by the Anti Bullying Alliance (ABA)

The roles involved in bullying

OUTSIDER
The **Outsider** ignores or doesn't see the bullying and doesn't want to get involved.

TARGET
The **Target** is the person at whom the bullying is aimed at.

RINGLEADER
The **Ringleader** initiates and leads the bullying.

REINFORCER
The **Reinforcer** supports the bullying, might laugh or encourage what's going on but doesn't 'do' it.

DEFENDER
The **Defender** stands up for someone being bullied. Knows that bullying is wrong and feels confident enough to defend. They might talk to an adult in school.

ASSISTANT
The **Assistant** is actively involved in 'doing' the bullying. But does not lead it.

These roles are not static. Children can play different roles depending on the situation they are in. Bullying is seen to be a group phenomenon. Others can have a significant influence on the outcomes of behaviours in school either intentionally or otherwise. By utilising these roles and encouraging other options, such as not laughing along or checking in after the incident to say that you will help a target to report, you can have a positive effect on bullying incidents. For children that are bullying, they can often feel very stuck in their negative and hurtful behaviour. They can feel trapped in a cycle themselves and find it hard to see how they are able to change. They may, for example, be trying to 'impress' other children, feel that it is expected of them or have experienced bullying themselves. It is therefore often helpful to look at the wider group when developing responses to bullying. It is also important to note that children and young people may not always feel able to stand up to bullying and may worry about becoming the target themselves. The more we can discuss these roles with children and young people the more we can help them find solutions to these situations. Finding a solution to the bullying may involve work with this wider group to understand what is driving the behaviours. Children need to understand these roles as well.

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Ask yourself a key question:

What / who is incentivising the ringleader to continue their behaviour?

The answer to this question may not be immediately obvious, you may need to speak to a number of pupils before you can begin to understand the situation, but having this question firmly in your mind will support you to find resolutions to the situation. Maybe the pupil is enjoying the feedback they are getting from their peer group, maybe this behaviour is making them feel more powerful when they feel out of control in other aspects of their lives or maybe they want adult attention. Incentives may not always be obvious but are often the key to resolving complex situations.

Sentence starters and helpful questions for talking to children and young people where bullying has been reported. It is important for the child or young person to feel safe and ready to talk before being asked questions about what has happened. Asking the child / young person directly if they are happy to discuss might be a good opener…

- *Can you tell me about….?*
- *Can you tell me some more about what has been going on?*
- *Can you tell me a bit more about this?*
- *Has anything like this happened before?*
- *What is your relationship generally like with XXXXX?*
- *How do you feel about all of this?*
- *How do you feel about this now?*
- *What do you think would make the situation better for you?*
- *What would you like to happen to resolve this?*
- *What would make you feel safe in the playground etc.?*

(if you are dealing with a report of bullying you will also need to use supplementary questions to find out more about the details of the situation, using open ended questions which are non judgemental will help pupils, whether they are targets of bullying or the pupil involved in the bullying incident, to feel listened to and able to explain the situation from their perspective.)

Speaking to the pupil who has been bullied

When a child or young person tells you they are being bullied, whether it's happening face to face or online, your reaction is vitally important. Children and young people will have often been through a lot of upset before they tell someone, and their experience will be directly affected by the response they get. We need to listen and get our responses right and we should always be mindful of this.

Our responses must be underpinned by the values of fairness, equality and inclusion. **We should ask ourselves: Is what I am doing ensuring all children are represented, included and not ignored? Am I meeting *my needs* as an adult or responding to what this child needs now?** These are all questions that will help us frame an effective response. Every situation is unique so we need to have a way of thinking about bullying that lets us consider different responses, rather than one fixed way of doing things.

We also need to establish that this is actually bullying. Children will sometimes claim that they are being bullied but it is actually a one-off unkind comment or it is a complicated friendship issue where both parties have been hurtful, but does not constitute bullying Sometimes this will not be clear until you have spoken to both parties. Using the framework below will support you to understand the situation better and ascertain whether this is a bullying situation or not.

Listen – give the child your full attention

They may have chosen to tell you at a less than convenient moment. It is important that the pupil feels listened to and the following guidelines are based on what children and young people have told us are helpful:-

- If you cannot speak to them there and then, it is important to still acknowledge how they are feeling. Reassure them that they have done the right thing by coming to you and arrange a time when you will speak to them about it further.
- Find a safe and comfortable place where there will be no interruptions. Let the child know that they have done the best thing by coming to speak to you, that bullying is never acceptable and that they deserve to feel safe in their environment.

- Empathic listening skills are key; be reflective and communicate that you are listening effectively – this can be a challenge. Children and young people are often concerned that no one will take them seriously if they tell that they are being bullied, or that the situation will get worse by involving adults. You need to show them that you are listening and that you are taking them seriously.
- Gently encourage them to talk, find out what happened, who was involved, where and when.
- Let them speak, without interruption as far as possible, but don't be afraid to ask questions when they have finished. Be mindful that some children may not be open straight away and may test you to see if you are listening or paying attention before sharing their concerns.
- Listen to what they want you to do
- The role of the adult helping is to work with them to help restore their feeling of being in control of themselves and their ability to affect what happens. Your challenge lies in how you work with them to acknowledge what has been happening and to help them regain their sense of self, balance and control.
- Once they have told you their story you need to find out what they want you to do. Many young people will tell you that they don't want you to do anything, but if they feel they have some sort of control over the situation then they are more likely to admit that they want the bullying to stop. To help make this happen, it is vital that their views are taken into account when planning how to deal with the allegations.
- Tell them that you are really glad they came to you to talk about the bullying and that you are always there to listen. Promise to check back to make sure that whatever agreements you have made are happening - and make sure you do it!

Bullying can have long-term impacts on children and young people. You need to be aware that even if the behaviour stops, the impact can still be felt and the process of moving on from what may have been a traumatic event will need ongoing monitoring and support.

There isn't any single approach when responding to bullying, and what works for one child or situation, may not work for another. If you are unsure of how to respond or are not sure what will work, explore options, ask what they think would happen if you follow a certain course of action and explore alternatives.

When and how to involve parents will vary according to the age and understanding of the children and young people involved. With younger pupils or where there is a high risk of harm, schools should inform parents and carers at an early stage, before deciding a way forward with the pupils involved. Parents and carers often feel that they are informed too late in the process. It will always be a decision of professional judgement about if and when parents and carers should be informed when considering bullying incidents with older pupils If there are potential

safeguarding concerns about pupil safety or a young person's wellbeing, parents and carers should always be informed.

Bullying can have a long-lasting impact on a young person's mental health for those who are getting bullied, witnessing bullying and doing the bullying. That is why our first step is about securing and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of those involved. It is important to have a record of these considerations. In most bullying situations you do not need to use outside agencies such as social workers or police, however, this should always be considered. Young people often tell us that at this stage they aren't asked what they would like to happen, so it's important to involve them along the way.

Speaking to the pupil who has bullied

Ask open ended questions

Rather than asking accusatory questions, start by asking open ended questions. Allowing children time to express what has happened in their own words without feeling defensive. You may not have all the facts so allow them to speak before challenging any behaviour.

Check they are OK

Asking if they are OK is an important question to ask. It can often help to alleviate feelings of blame for young people which can make them feel defensive and may also provide you with some useful information about their actions.

This doesn't mean you don't discuss the behaviour they have displayed, but it can help to put children in a place of being able to reflect on that and will also give children an opportunity to share anything that is concerning them before getting to the negative behaviour.

Timing and confidentiality are important

Think carefully about when you have these difficult conversations. For example, straight after incidents emotions can be heightened and calling someone into a meeting in front of their friends can be embarrassing for both the targets of the bullying and those bullying. Consider if you need to wait for an hour or two to allow people the space to calm down or to ensure that other pupils that don't need to be involved aren't made aware of the bullying

Helping children who are bullying to consider the impact of bullying

There is research that children who bully may not have as high levels of empathy as other children. In the first meetings with them it's unlikely to be pertinent to bring the target and ringleaders together to discuss the impact of the ringleader's actions, but use your first meeting to ascertain how much empathy the children bullying have for their targets. You might then want to consider how you can increase that empathy. For example, through use of restorative approaches or circle time. Whilst you may not want to ask directly, you will want to find out if there is something that is troubling the child/ young person themselves that may be driving the behaviour. Using lots of open ended questions and listening carefully for the how they are feeling may give you the opportunity to find out a bit more. When we are able to listen well, children and young people are often wiling to tell us about what is going on for them and what might be driving the behaviour.

Ask what they want to happen and how they think things can get better

Just as with children who are bullied, it's important to ask children 'what can make this better?'. It will help them to be clear about responsibility for what has happened and give them a feeling of control about what can happen going forward and allow them the space to let you know that they understand what behaviour was and wasn't acceptable. Deciding on a way forward together and recording it (even signing it as an agreed contract) can help to set out clearly what you expect going forward whilst also bringing that child with you. Don't forget to agree and share those plans with the targets of the bullying as well

Responding to bullying checklist

Responding to online bullying

Check pupil are safe

Is anyone's physical health or wellbeing at risk? Are there actions needing to be taken immediately to ensure safety? This needs to be dealt with first. E.g. ensure lunchtime staff are aware and allocate an adult that will keep an eye on the pupil at lunchtime, ensure the pupil has a named adult to go to if there are further problems.

Speak to and involve the right staff

Do you need to involve your DSL in this discussion, are their safeguarding implications for other pupils as well or wider issues that will need to be addressed by the school?

Ensure you tell the pupil/s being bullied that you are taking it seriously, it's not their fault and they don't have to put up with bullying

Sometimes in our efforts to make sure we have understood, recorded concerns and taken relevant actions, we can forget that one of the most important things we can do is to offer reassurance and remind the pupil that whatever has happened they do not need to tolerate bullying.

Ensure you have asked the pupil/s being bullied how they're feeling and how they think it can be resolved

Staff dealing with online bullying should use screenshots and screen grabs to ensure that they have evidence of the bullying when it has been shared with them.

Schools will need to consider what actions they need to take to ensure pupils are safe. Because online bullying is likely to occur outside of school, these may differ from measures used for in person bullying. Examples include daily check-ins with the pupils who has been targeted or make regular contact with parents who may need to monitor a child/ young person's device to ensure that the bullying has stopped and is not repeated.

Recognising the child or young person's feelings about what has happened and how they would like to see the situation resolved is a key element of dealing with a bullying situation. Even if you need to investigate and find out more about the situation, showing empathy and encouraging the pupil to identify how they are feeling is really important, as is asking them how they think the situation can be resolved. Very often children and young people will suggest solutions to bullying situations that adults may not have thought of and which may help resolve what are often complex relational situations. This is very different to promising to fix the situation or promising actions which may not be possible. Open ended questions, empathic listening and restorative questions can be very useful tools when talking to the child or young person.

Inform the pupil/s being bullied what you will do next?

It is important that you let the pupil being bullied know what your next steps are, that you will be speaking to other staff and to the pupils involved. This is likely to reduce the pupil's anxiety about the situation.

Have you informed parents and carers?

It is important that parents and carers are clear about what has happened and what steps you are taking to resolve the situation and keep pupils safe. Schools will also need to be mindful of the need to maintain confidentiality of the pupils involved, including the pupil accused of the bullying behaviour.

Preventing the bullying from re-occurring

Once you've secured the safety of those involved, the next step is about working with the group of individuals involved to prevent the bullying from reoccurring. Bullying is a group behaviour. It rarely happens between two individuals in isolation, so it's important to consider the wider peer group at this stage.

Develop a strategy with the target and check they are happy with your agreed way forward. Seek agreement from all those involved about the way forward. Sometimes this could be done with a signed agreement by those involved or simply a conversation, but it is important to record this agreement.

Check in with the target/s regularly. Do they have a discreet way to report to you about how they are feeling at school regularly?

Ensure you follow up with the person who has bullied as well. If you have identified triggers for the bullying occurring have these been addressed from the child/ young persons perspective?

Talk to parents/carers. Is your response built upon changing the behaviour of the group and not solely on changing the behaviour of the target/s? This is important to avoid sending a message to the target that the bullying is their fault

 Record names based on the roles involved in bullying, how they were involved and what you could do to change their behaviour

Merton anti-bullying best practice toolkit

Role	Name/s	How they were involved?	What could this group do to help stop the bullying? E.g. stop the reinforcers laughing or create defenders	Agreement: what approach have you agreed to take with each group?	Review: What levers did you use, and did they work?
Target/s					
Ringleader/s					
Reinforcer/s					
Assistant/s					
Defender/s					
Outsider/s (you don't need to outline everyone! Just those that you think could potentially have a positive impact)					

Restorative approaches to bullying

Why use a restorative approach?

The academic research shows that both a punitive approach (i.e. an approach that focuses on punishments such as detentions) and restorative approach (i.e. where the focus is on working with those involved to repair the harm that has been done) have similar levels of efficacy. They prove to be effective in 70-80% of cases. However there are several reasons why a restorative approach that targets getting to the cause of the bullying behaviour and repairing relationships may be more beneficial long term than a punitive, sanction-based response.

1. Giving detentions and fixed term exclusions does not get to the cause of the reason why the bullying has occurred. The perpetrator may just move onto another victim.

2. A solely sanction focused response can make children who bully feel aggrieved and angrier at their targets and are unlikely to rebuild relationships with them.

3. Often young people are not focused on the 'rights and wrongs' of incidents and place more value on repairing the relationships involved and being able to move on.

4. Children might be bullying for reasons of adversity they might be facing. For example, are they being bullied themselves? Are they having a hard time at school? A punitive response does not offer a long term solution whereby the listening involved in a restorative approach might

Top tips for using a restorative approach

It is important however that restorative approaches are implemented well. It should always be voluntary for both the child who has bullied and the child who has been bullied. It is important that when both parties meet that the adult ensures a fair process where the focus is on the harm caused. Using a restorative approach does not mean there is no consequence to the bullying behaviour; part of the discussion with the person who has bullied should be about consequences. Consequences that are linked to the behaviour are more likely to have an impact on the person who has bullied, for example they may need to have their lunchtimes away from their peer group for a set period of time as a result of their actions (if this is where the harm has happened).

1. Ensure staff using this approach have had training – a badly run restorative meeting can potentially cause more harm for the pupils who have been the target of bullying,
2. Ensure pupils involved in the meeting are clear about how the meeting will be run and who will be there.
3. Ensure the meeting takes place in a suitable environment with no interruptions and that seating is arranged to ensure impartiality. Clear rules for the meeting need to be agreed at the start and maintained during the meeting. If a pupil is not sticking to them then the meeting should end. Ensuring a safe space for the target of bullying is paramount.
4. If the meeting is successful and is able to come up with agreed actions that are acceptable to both parties then it is really important that these are recorded and monitoring is put in place. A member of staff should be given the responsibility to check in with the pupils involved at agreed intervals to check that all is well and there have not been any further incidents. Key adults must be aware of what has been agreed. More information about restorative approaches including a short online module can be accessed here:

https://learning.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/course/4029/restorative-thinking-and-positive-relationships-preventing-and-managing-conflict

The 5 restorative themes

- *What happened?*
- *What were you thinking?*
- *How were you feeling?*
- *Who has been affected by this?*
- *What do you need now to move on?*
- *What needs to happen now, so that the harm can be repaired?*

Remember these are themes– you will need to think about what questions you will ask – remember to use open questions that build understanding of what happened, the harm that has resulted and what each party needs to move forward. Needs have to be met in order for people to be able to put the incident behind them.

Engaging parents to understand bullying

Engaging parents as part of a whole school approach

A whole school approach to bullying will ensure that parents and carers understand bullying, know what to look out for and how to support their children and young people. Parents and carers can also be involved in the development of your school policy. Consider events that will be of interest to parents – for example workshops on online bullying. If your school participates in anti-bullying week this is an excellent opportunity to engage with parents. Regular communication with parents on the theme of bullying is more effective than one off events, and can be linked with your whole school approach to mental health.

There are excellent resources that you can utilise to support this work, you can download the leaflets below for inspiration:

Diana Awards Parents Guide to Anti Bullying:-

[5ec660fbb387e47eb5427e03_TDA_ABRE20_1205_Parents guide to AB.pdf (website-files.com)](#)

Surrey CC Leaflet for parents

[parent.carer AB leaflet 0710 (surreycc.gov.uk)](#)

Brighton and Hove leaflet for parents

[5161 School bullying booklet web.pdf (brighton-hove.gov.uk)](#)

United Against Bullying Programme

The United Against Bullying programme is the Anti-Bullying Alliance's whole-school anti-bullying programme. It supports schools to reduce bullying and improve the wellbeing of all children, focusing on those most at risk. It is free and includes: A 360° audit and action planning tool,an online pupil questionnaire to ascertain levels of bullying and wellbeing in your school, tailored resources to support you to implement your action plan access to CPD, An interactive anti-bullying Parent Information Tool to provide to parents

United Against Bullying (UAB) Programme (anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)

DfE Hope Against Hate self review tool

Respectful School Communities Self-Review and Signposting Tool (educateagainsthate.com)

Diana Award whole school approach tool

TAKING A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO ANTI-BULLYING (stoppestennu.nl)

Speaking with parents of the perpetrator

Remember to not call any child a 'bully'. This is unhelpful and can make children and parents feel defensive. Instead acknowledge that they are displaying some unkind and bullying behaviour and you want to work with them to try to come up with a solution.

Be clear that this is what you think has happened rather than 100% facts. You may not be aware of everything that has taken place so ensure you show a willingness to listen and are not jumping to any conclusions.

Acknowledge that this is not easy to hear and that you are resolved to come up with solutions to make things better for everyone.

Ensure you listen to the parent's perspective – they may well have a view on what has happened and ideas about how it can best be dealt with.

Be clear about your school policies, expectations about how children should be treating others and what needs to change. Ensure you share with the parent or carer the planned response and ensure you follow up appropriately if this is appropriate.

Case studies from Merton Schools

case study 1

Themes:

Persistent exclusion from friendship group

What happened?

Ringleader (R) of the friendship group excluding one child from their games. The other children do not stand up to R. If the victim (V) does join in the games, their points are not counted. R consistently calls V unkind names and ensures that other children do not play with them either. This has been going on for a number of weeks and impacted greatly on V's wellbeing. V's parents communicated concerns with Class Teacher.

Complicating factors?

The behaviours reported have never been seen by a member of staff. R denies much of this and claims it is merely passion for the game they are playing and being competitive.

Who needed to be involved?

Dealt with by class teacher and middle leader jointly after taking advice from senior leader.

What did you do that was effective?

First step was information seeking. Class Teacher followed up on email with a phone call to investigate the bullying allegations further, accurately recording the minutes of the discussion. Next step, Class Teacher speaks to any children involved and records this information. Following from this, a number of additional actions are put in place:

Arrange with V before break and lunch who they are going to play with

Check in with V after break and lunch if there were any incidents that can then be addressed immediately

Keep a log of V's feedback after every break and lunch

If there are any unkind incidents, contact parents of both children by phone before the end of the day

Provide V with a permission slip allowing entry into the school to speak to the teacher if required

Encourage and strengthen friendships between V and other members of the class

Middle leader to meet with year group team and member of staff on duty at break/lunch to make them aware of situation. Antibullying lead and designated member of staff who deals with absences also informed

Member of support staff on lunch duties to work 1:1 with V on a weekly basis to build a positive relationship so that V feels comfortable approaching that adult outside rather than waiting to speak to Class Teacher

Circle Time designated to teaching children games to play together. Rules agreed as a class and opportunities for children to play these provided.

Pastoral support provided to R through social stories

PSHE lesson designed to recap some of the learning in anti-bullying week

What advice would you offer to other schools?

Have a range of strategies to put in place ready but implement them gradually to assess the impact. If the incidents of bullying are not improving, you then have further strategies to implement.

What did you learn from all of this?

Importance of checking in with the children involved regularly. Just because incidents may decrease or disappear for a while does not mean that the bullying is solved. Regular communication with V and family to monitor is important.

Case study 2

Themes:

Online bullying via social media

What happened?

A number of children wrote unkind messages on a group WhatsApp directed at one individual. It then came out that this had also happened before but the victim had not told anyone. The ringleader (R) told the group admin to remove V from the group. Some of the screenshots of the messages sent to the Class Teacher involved threatening language directed at V.

Complicating factors?

The minimum age use for WhatsApp is 16.

Who needed to be involved?

Although the class teacher supported the wellbeing of the children involved, this was dealt with by senior leadership.

What did you do that was effective?

It was important to acknowledge that as a school we agreed that this was bullying behaviour. V was provided with a learning mentor in school who was a familiar adult that would designate time to being able to listen and offer support for V's wellbeing. The senior leader who had taken on the responsibility of this case communicated with the parents of all the children in the WhatsApp group- many of whom had not realised nor given permission for their children to use this social media channel. In terms of the specific children who targeted language towards the victim, parents were informed that the school viewed this as bullying and parents were provided with a copy of the school's Anti-bullying statement. Parents were informed that the school would be taking steps to work with the children involved to educate them further but if the behaviours continued, actions and consequences would follow in line with the school's behaviour policy. The children involved had a number of breaktime learning sessions with a designated adult on bullying, the impact of this and in particular on cyber bullying. PSHE lessons were also adapted to reflect the current need and focused on the use and dangers of social media.**What advice would you offer to other schools?**

Now that children have become so used to remote learning and communicating with their peers online, lessons on online safety, acceptable use and cyberbullying should happen at the beginning of each year. The information discussed with children within these lessons should also be communicated with parents.

Anti-bullying is often a stand-alone week in the year whereas in addition to this, it needs to be a thread amongst all learning and pastoral support.

What did you learn from all of this?

Children appeared to feel a sense of anonymity when performing bullying behaviours online. This fed into the timing and planning for lessons associated with this

Case study 3

Themes: Social media

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What happened? When student A was in lower school they posted a video on their tik tok account which contained some inappropriate lyrics. At break time student B challenged them on this and it led to a public argument, this was intercepted by the staff on duty. It was reported to the pastoral team who investigated the situation. A successful restorative meeting then took place between the two students. School staff also worked with Student A on the reasons why the comments were inappropriate. Student A's family were contacted to encourage increased monitoring on social media and a school also issued a sanction. Staff worked with Student B to ensure she understood the importance of reporting such things if they happened again, and a sanction was issued for the public argument.

In upper school student A had a friendship fallout with student C and during this argument the video resurfaced and student C sent inappropriate messages to student A about the content of the video. Student A was very upset as she felt that it had already been dealt with. Following the investigation, pastoral support explained to the pupil that the video was old and the school had already addressed the issue. Staff worked with student C to ensure she knew how to report things next time rather than messaging student A directly. Student C's parents were called and a sanction was issued for the messages. A restorative meeting took place between student A and C.

Student C, however, struggled to move forward following the restorative meeting and continued to send student A messages. One lunchtime a lunchtime supervisor found Student A having lunch in the toilets, they asked them why they were there and Student A burst into tears and they were taken to pastoral support. Student A was supported by a member of staff while the pastoral team conducted an investigation.

Student C's parents were called into school for a meeting, student C was assigned a specific pastoral support assistant to support them with moving on from the incident. Student C was given a sanction in line with the school policy.

Complicating factors?

Once something is posted on line it is there forever

Who needed to be involved?

 Trained restorative approaches staff member, pastoral support team and parent/carers

What did you do that was effective?

Educating the students involved, offering support as well as sanctions.

What advice would you offer to other schools?

You must not ignore online issues as they spill into school life.

What did you learn from all of this?

That after a restorative meeting it is important that all parties understand what they have agreed to and that there is a follow up meeting / check-in with all of those concerned. If the issues aren't resolved they may need to be dealt with individually with the pupils involved.

Reporting bullying

Use of online reporting

Using systems such as CPOMs allows all staff to log incidents and receive feedback from action taken if appropriate. DSL's and other pastoral staff can have elevated access to the site, are alerted to all incidents and can build a picture of what is happening for all pupils involved. Advantages to using a system like CPOMs means reports can be generated and data analysed. When a pupil leaves and enrols in a new school or college, transfers of the individual pupils account can be made electronically if both schools are using the system. These online systems are particularly useful for

recording bullying as they help support schools to collate incidents that can be easily analysed to determine patterns and emerging trends which may require further action by the school.

Filtering and monitoring systems

Schools are required to have in place systems to keep pupils safe from harmful content online. Schools will use a range of tools to do this. Schools should also monitor devices to ensure that bullying is not occurring whilst pupils are using apps such as Teams and Google Meets that allow messaging between pupils.

Examples of reporting and recording templates from Merton schools

Exemplar Bullying and prejudice based incident reporting and monitoring form

For each incident please complete one form and return to the <u>designated teacher</u>

for collation and monitoring.

- **Focus of Bullying or prejudice-based incident**

	Tick all that apply

Appearance	
Class/Socio-economic	
Home circumstance (e.g. caring role)	
Ethnicity/Race	
Religion/Belief	
Gender	
Gender identity - transphobic	
Sexual orientation – homophobic or biphobic	
Sexualised	
SEND	
Ability/application	

- **Type of Bullying (indicate all that apply)**

Physical	
Property	

Verbal	
Psychological	
Online	
Other:	

- **Those involved – please also record where appropriate:**
    - perpetrators from outside the school community
    - children/young people who are Children Looked After (CLA) or who have SEND

	Year group	Other relevant information
Person/s responsible for the bullying		
Target of bullying		

- **Details of the incident(s)**

Date	Place	Time

Name of witnesses / bystanders
Repeat incident or serious incident
Any relevant supporting information e.g. witness account, screen grabs etc

- **Action taken:**
  Please record all steps taken to respond to the incident (including meetings, letters, consequences, interventions)

- **Summary of those notified and/or involved**

- **Date for monitoring progress of those involved**.Follow up on the incident and check that all parties are progressing well academically and socially

  Date…………………………………………

Member of staff Name …………………………………………………….. Date ………………………....

Outcomes/actions from follow up

Key contacts

Merton

Met Police youth engagement

This service offers support to Merton primary schools which include talks to year 6 on bullying, hate crime and staying safe online.   It also takes referrals for children that have come to notice for behaviour issues or as victims. This includes home visits and signposting to outside

clubs, activities or mentoring. This could include any children involved in bullying. Schools should consider whether this might be beneficial for individual bullying situations as they arise.

Contact for professionals use only:- mark.Towler@met.police.uk

School inclusion Coordinator

If you are considering use of exclusion to deal with a bullying incident, you may wish to discuss this with Merton's School Inclusion Co-ordinator, who offers advice to schools and families around suspensions and permanent exclusions, as well as preventative measures to avoid the need for exclusions.

liz.kelly@merton.gov.uk

VBS Manager

Advice around bullying including whole school practice to deal with bullying and training for staff.

denise.dyer@merton.gov.uk

Equalities Advisor

alison.cramp@merton.gov.uk

School Safeguarding Officer

Ian McGraw Ian.McGraw@merton.gov.uk

The Virtual school

Karen Reid Karen.Reid@merton.gov.uk

National Organisations

Professionals Online Support Helpline

Supporting professionals working with children and young people with any online safety issue.

The Professionals Online Safety Helpline is a free service for professionals and volunteers working with children and young people. It provides signposting, advice and mediation to resolve online safety issues staff face about themselves, such as protecting professional identity and online harassment, or problems affecting young people, for example cyber-bullying or sexting issues.

Professionals Online Safety Helpline - UK Safer Internet Centre

Anti bullying alliance

ABA provides expertise in relation to all forms of bullying between children and young people.

- Supporting learning and sharing best practice through membership;
  Raising awareness of bullying through Anti-Bullying Week and other coordinated, shared campaigns
  Delivering programme work at a national and local level to help stop bullying.

Anti-Bullying Alliance

Kidscape

Kidscape provides advice and support to professionals, parents and pupils to prevent bullying. It is a national organisation that produces resources and information and offers training to schools

Help With Bullying (kidscape.org.uk)

NSPCC

NSPCC is a national organisation that provides advice and support on a range of issues that includes bullying. In addition to information for professionals, they also provide advice and support to children and young people.

Bullying and advice on coping and making it stop | Childline

The Diana Award

The Diana Award Anti-Bullying Campaign engages 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. A range of resources are available for download to support whole school practice to prevent bullying

Anti-Bullying Ambassador Programme (antibullyingpro.com)

Advice and support for pupils

Knowing where to go for support when schools are closed is an important aspect of anti bullying work in schools. The following organisations provide support to children and young people around bullying.

NSPCC

NSPCC is a national organisation that provides advice and support on a range of issues that includes bullying to children and young people.

[Bullying and advice on coping and making it stop | Childline](#)

National Bullying Helpline

0300 323 0169 or 0845 22 55 787

[Help and Advice for Children affected by bullying (nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk)](#)

ChildLine

ChildLine is the UK's free, confidential helpline for children and young people. They offer advice and support, by phone and online, 24 hours a day. Whenever and wherever you need them, they'll be there. Call 0800 1111. They have a designated page for bullying issues that includes a new video about building up your confidence after bullying.

[Childline | Childline](#)

EACH

EACH has a freephone Helpline for children experiencing homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying or harassment: 0808 1000 143. It's open Monday to Friday 10am-5pm.

[Homophobic Transphobic Helpline - EACH | EACH](#)

Victim Support

They offer support to young people affected by crime. Their Children and Young People's (CYP) Service also deals with cases of bullying; offering advice and working with professionals to ensure young people get the support they need. 08 08 16 89 111.

[Children and young people - Victim Support](#)

CEOP

CEOP provide help and support around online bullying

Home | CEOP Education (thinkuknow.co.uk)

The Mix

Offers support to anyone under 25 about anything that's troubling them. Email support available via their **online contact form**.

Free **1-2-1 webchat service** available.Free short-term **counselling service** available. Opening times: 3pm - 12am, seven days a week
0808 808 4994

Top Tips for Children and Young People

Anti-Bullying Week 2008 (anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)

Model policies

Developing an anti bullying policy
Updating_Writing_Your_Anti-Bullying_Policy (1).pdf (anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)

Webinar: Rewriting Your School's Anti-Bullying Policy (Primary Focus) (antibullyingpro.com)

Webinar: Rewriting Your School's Anti-Bullying Policy (Secondary Focus) (antibullyingpro.com)

Some pointers as to what to include:-
 Here are headers you may want to use in your anti-bullying policy.
1. Together we will stop bullying (our school commitment)
2. Ethos and values of our school community
3. Our definition of bullying

4. Understanding bullying behaviour
5. Bullying and keeping children safe (including how the anti-bullying policy relates to your safeguarding policy and any other related documents)
6. Bullying and discrimination
7. Stopping bullying wherever it takes place.
8. Preventing bullying (e.g., spotting the signs and symptoms of bullying, guidance on physical contact and consensual touch, zero tolerance for abusive or offensive language, curriculum content, staff training, pupil and parent workshops, participation in Anti-Bullying Week and Friendship Friday)
9. Reporting bullying
10. Responding to bullying
11. Measuring progress
12. Communicating the policy

Child Friendly Anti Bullying Policy

We believe that everyone has a right to feel safe and happy at school. **(Article 29)**

Bullying Can Be…..

Emotional: Hurting people's feelings, leaving them out. **(Article 15)**
Physical: Hurting someone, for example, pinching, kicking, punching or hitting. **(Article 19)**
Verbal: Regular and deliberate teasing or name calling **(Article 13)**
Online: Saying unkind things by text, e-mail and social media. **(Article 17)**
Discrimination: Using unkind words or actions that refer to a child's identity. **(Article 30)**

Be Ready	Be Respectful	Be Safe
__When Is It Bullying?__ **S**everal	Remember, everyone has a **RIGHT** to enjoy school.	__What Should I Do If I Think I Am Being Bullied?__ **S**tart

Times On Purpose anti-bullying alliance	STOP BULLYING We RESPECT this so we don't accept bullying behaviour at our school	Telling Other People **Who Can I Tell?** • A Friend • Parents / Carers • Adults at school • School buddies • Anyone you feel you can trust

Kindly shared by The Sherwood Primary School

Schools can also use the graphics and ideas for a pupil friendly policy from the Anti Bullying Alliance examples

Example of a Primary School Child-friendly Anti-Bullying Policy - anonymised.pdf (anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)

What is bullying?

Bullying is when a person is hurtful or unkind to someone else on purpose and usually more than once. Bullying can be done by one person or by a group of people. A useful way to remember bullying is

SEVERAL TIMES ON PURPOSE

(and hurtful!)

Bullying can be:

* Hitting or saying you are going to hit someone.
* Touching someone when they don't want you to.
* Calling someone names, teasing, using rude language or saying nasty things about someone to them or to other people.
* Stealing or damaging someone else's belongings.
* Ignoring someone on purpose or leaving them out.
* Sending hurtful or unkind texts, emails or online messages to someone or about someone.

Anti - Bullying

Words hurt as much as actions do. Think before you speak.

Make sure to be kind online.

In the year ending March 2020, an estimated one out of five children aged 10 to 15 years in England and Wales experienced at least one type of online bullying behaviour. This is approximately 764,000 children.

National UK Bullying Helpline:

Freephone - 0300 323 0169

Telephone - 0845 225 5787

Unite to end bullying