



Policy Document:

Anti-Bullying.

Policy Document:

Anti-Bullying.



Definition

In early childhood, parents, carers and teachers support a child's development by helping them to build and keep friendships. Young children play happily with each other or alongside each other most of the time, but sometimes aggression or temper tantrums can become an issue; often it is not helpful to call these incidents bullying.

Children feel frustration in the same way that adults do but can express their frustration with a temper tantrum or by lashing out. Very young children have not yet developed the language to express their feelings and are far less reserved than adults are so temper tantrums can be their way of expressing frustration and are part of their development.

However, bullying behaviour can be displayed by children as young as 3 years old. (Vlachou, M., Andreou, E., Botsoglou, K., & Didakalou, E., (2011). *Bully/victim problems among preschool children: a review of current research evidence Educational Psychology Review. 23(3). 329*)

Bullying behaviour has four key aspects: it is hurtful, it is intentional, it is repetitive, and it involves a power imbalance.

The definition of bullying is very important to understand when assessing the difference between 'relational conflict' – where there is a 'falling out' between individuals – and when it tips the balance to bullying.

Forms of Bullying

- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, ridicule, humiliation.
- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, pinching, violence, threats.
- Verbal: name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
- Racist: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive comments.
- Homophobic: because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality.
- Mobile/Internet: abusive emails, phone calls, text messages.

Recognition of Bullying

The following list highlights some of the signs of bullying. It is important to note that although a child could be displaying some of these signs or behaviours; it does not necessarily mean that the child is being bullied. These signs could indicate that the child has other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility.

Indicators of Bullying

- Unwillingness to attend Nursery/Out of School Clubs.
- Withdrawn, isolated behaviour.
- Complaining about missing possessions and lost money.
- Refuses to talk about the problem.
- Easily distressed.
- Lacking confidence, low self-esteem, anxious.
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive and unreasonable.
- Begins to bully other children.
- Changes in eating and sleeping patterns.
- Starts stammering.

- Has unexplained cuts and bruises.

Aims

At the Meadows we:

- Understand that bullying is not a 'rite of passage'. It is well researched that bullying causes long term damage to both the person on the receiving end, and those who bully. Challenging bullying behaviour in the early years provides an opportunity to 'nip it in the bud'.
- Are aware that it is not a child's fault if they are bullied. Children should never be told to just ignore it, or to change who they are. It is the children doing the bullying that need to change their behaviour and their attitude.
- Are aware that children need to be supported to speak out if they think someone is being unkind to them. They need to feel comfortable to approach staff and talk to them.
- Will ensure that our Anti-Bullying Policy is reviewed and is up to date, freely accessible and regularly promoted - and that it makes clear how we will respond to bullying as a community.
- Will not label a child a 'bully'. We know that this is an unhelpful label and says that bullying is something you are, rather than a behaviour choice you can change. Instead, we will talk about *bullying behaviour*.
- Will praise positive behaviour and interactions amongst children
- Will role model positive behaviour amongst staff and parents
- Will use story telling: many books explore empathy and cover sensitive topics with children, for example about children not being good friends or not playing together nicely.
- Will challenge stereotypes such as 'these are boys' toys' in a positive and friendly way
- Will think carefully about any ways we might prevent any instances of bullying or conflict in our setting if we find this happening. For example, are there areas that are less supervised than others or are there ways to empower children to alert us to issues as they arise? Or do we challenge negative language?
- Will be clear about how children should behave respectfully towards each other. For example: do we have ground rules such as not being able to say 'you can't play with me/us'?
- Encourage restorative approaches including supporting children to express their feelings in a safe space and to apologise to each other in meaningful ways.
- Will undertake empathy building activities which help young children learn how to express their feelings and recognise emotions in others, discussing the way that people are different, talking about kindness and helping others to feel better when they are upset.
- Will encourage assertiveness in children who might find it difficult to stand up for themselves. For example, by using role-play scenarios or other activities that show children how to express their emotions clearly and calmly.
- Will work with parents to ensure they understand our approach to bullying and relational conflict. Are they aware of signs to look out for in case their child might be bullied? Have a clear route for them to report anything they might be worried about. Be clear that it is important to not tell their child to fight back as this may make matters worse.
- Will help young children make sense of differences: present positive attitudes and messages about differences amongst us all and the benefits such attitudes bring to all people.

Procedures - Dealing with Bullying

Helping the child or young person

- Take bullying seriously. Ensure the child is safe.
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.
- Keep records of what is said i.e., what happened, by whom and when.

- Report any concerns to the person in charge where the bullying is occurring.

Action towards the bully

- Try to help the bully to understand the consequences of his/her behaviour and seek an apology from the bully.
- Inform the bully's parents/guardians and impose sanctions as necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully to change behaviour.

If any member Meadows Day Care Centre staff receives a report of bullying:

- The staff member should listen to the child who is being bullied and reassure them that they are safe and have done the right thing by telling someone.
- If the bullying is not reported but a staff member observes that it is taking place, they should take the child aside and encourage them to open up about what's been happening to them.
- All reports of bullying should be treated seriously, the staff member should try to get as much detail as possible from the child about the other children who are suspected of bullying, when it occurs and how often it occurs.
- Even if bullying is not happening at the Centre, the staff member still has a responsibility to try and help the child.
- The staff member should explain to the child that in order to help them the Manager/Session Leader has to be informed.

The Manager/Session Leader should sit in with the staff member and the child and allow the child to recount the story freely. The staff should use open but not leading questions to try to get as much detail from the child as possible. The Manager/Session Leader should keep a record of what the child has said.

- In circumstances where the Manager/Session Leader is named as the bully then the staff member should contact the Management Committee.
- In circumstances where another member of staff is named then the Session Leader should be as discreet as possible and contact the Manager and/or the Management Committee immediately.
- If the bullying is occurring outside the Centre, for instance in school, then the Manager/Session Leader should inform the child's parents and suggest that they inform the relevant authorities.

Investigating reports of bullying in the Centre

- The Manager/Session Leader should investigate all reports of bullying within the Centre. If the Manager/Session Leader is the one being accused, the Management Committee should conduct the investigation.
- The Manager/Session Leader should try to establish the facts surrounding the allegation. Both the victim and the child being accused should be treated equally and fairly and dealt with separately.
- The Manager/Session Leader should inform the child accused of bullying that a complaint has been made against them and give them the opportunity to respond.

Resolving the Bullying

- If the allegation is found to be true, then the Manager/Session Leader should try to establish why the child has been bullying and explain the hurt that it causes their victim.
- The Manager/Session Leader should remind the child of the Centre's Behaviour Policy and explain that bullying will not be tolerated. The consequences if their behaviour continues should also be explained, for example time out, exclusion etc.
- The Session Leader should ask the child accused of bullying to make a genuine apology to their victim and if possible, the Manager/Session Leader should try to reconcile both parties.

- When the parents of those involved come to collect the children the Manager/Session Leader should ask to speak to them privately and explain what's been happening and what has been done to try and resolve the situation.
- The parents should be reminded of the Centre's behaviour policy and asked that they help the Meadows to enforce this.
- The Manager/Session Leader and other staff should monitor the situation to ensure that repeated bullying does not take place.
- In serious cases or when bullying persists, the Manager/Session Leader should inform the Management Committee who should try to resolve the situation.
- Excluding the bully from the Centre **should only be used as a last resort.**

[Please also see policies Promoting Positive Behaviour, Health and Safety Policy, Child Protection/Safeguarding. This policy was written with reference to the Anti Bullying Alliance see - www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/.../early-years]